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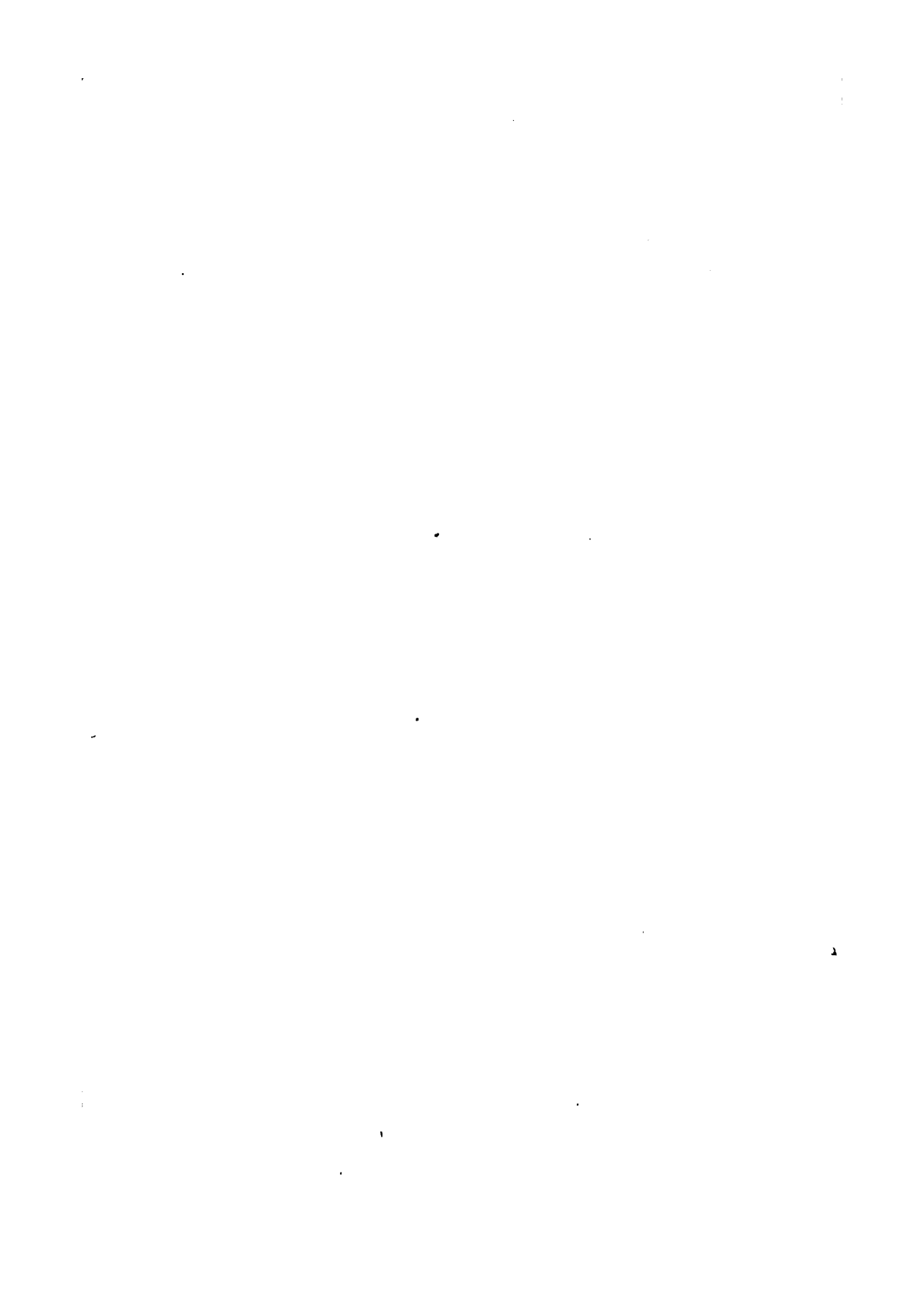
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**INVERNESS IN THE FIFTEENTH  
CENTURY.**



# Inverness in the Fifteenth Century.

BY

EVAN M. BARRON.

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## PREFACE.

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THE articles which go to form this volume are reprinted from the *Inverness Courier*. They are a revision and extension of a lecture delivered in December 1905, and I have not thought it advisable to alter the original lecture form. The first two chapters are printed almost exactly as they were delivered, but the remainder of the book has been entirely rewritten, as in one lecture only a few outstanding historical events could be dealt with, and these but very briefly. Since the articles appeared in the *Courier* they have been carefully revised, and several minor additions and corrections made.

E. M. B.



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**INVERNESS IN THE FIFTEENTH  
CENTURY.**

well versed in the history of the mediæval Church, of mediæval laws and customs, and of the mediæval burghs. To such a person the compilation of a history of mediæval Inverness would be a work of surpassing interest, and would be of much value not alone to the student of local history, but to the student of Highland and Scottish history also. This paper is merely a slight contribution towards such a history, and professes to give only a sketch of the general appearance of Inverness in the fifteenth century, of the life of its inhabitants, of the social conditions under which they lived, and of the position and importance of the burgh itself, and thereafter to deal briefly with some of the outstanding events in the history of the town and of the community so described.

Before we proceed to the paper proper, it may perhaps be of interest to indicate briefly the sources and authorities from which I have gathered my information. The first and most important of these is "Invernessiana," by the late Dr Fraser-Mackintosh, which is a veritable mine of information to the student. It is by far the most valuable book on Inverness which has yet been published. It would be a mistake, however, for one wishing merely to read about old Inverness to go to "Invernessiana." It is a book to be studied, not read for pleasure. Then

there are the "Transactions of the Inverness Field Club," which contain many papers of the highest value, particularly those by Mr Kenneth Macdonald on Inverness in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, and certain of Dr Fraser-Mackintosh's. There are also in existence many contemporary documents, of which the most important collections are the "Exchequer Rolls of Scotland," the "Ancient Laws and Customs of the Burghs of Scotland," and the "Records of the Convention of Royal Burghs." Professor Hume Brown's works are all invaluable. His "Early Travellers in Scotland," and "Scotland from Contemporary Documents," provide a mass of information, and are in themselves entertaining reading; while his "History of Scotland" has enabled me to construct a fairly correct chronological sketch of the leading events connected with Inverness in the fifteenth century. To his "Scotland in the Time of Queen Mary," I am indebted for much general information regarding burgh life and social conditions. Besides these there are, of course, the various clan histories which in recent years have set right many of the old traditions and vague incidents of Highland history with which Inverness was closely bound up. Of these, the *Clan Donald* is decidedly the most useful and reliable. I am indebted also to Mr Wallace, of the High School, for the results of an investigation he has been pursuing into the position of the



town's fosse and palisade, and to a series of articles on Highland Castles which appeared in the "Courier" some years ago, for the best consecutive account of the Castle of Inverness which has yet appeared.

Now, I want, in the first place, to place before you a picture of Inverness in the fifteenth century. To that end I wish you to disabuse your minds of the present appearance of the town, and of any preconceived notions you may have formed of its appearance in mediæval times from your own general reading. For Inverness in the fifteenth century was alike in its general appearance, its extent, and its surroundings, absolutely different from the Inverness of the present day; and it was from its position and its importance very different from the generally accepted idea of a Scottish burgh of the period. The dominating feature of the burgh was its Castle. The Castle stood all through the fifteenth century on the present Castle Hill, and the town clustered round the base of the hill, under, as it were, the protecting shadow of the Castle.

At the beginning of our period I do not suppose that the Castle was either very large or very strong. The old castle had been destroyed by Bruce, and we have no knowledge of the building, which certainly stood there in the latter half of the fourteenth century, and which seems to have been at least partially destroyed by Donald of the Isles when

he seized it and Inverness prior to the battle of Harlaw. Whatever it was, however, it seems to have been surrounded by a palisade. The hill, it must be remembered, was steep and not easy of access. On the west side it descended abruptly to the river, on the east to the hollow on which Castle Street is built, and on the north to Bridge Street. On the south its natural defences were not so good, and it is highly probable that there the palisade was of considerable strength. There is little doubt that the palisade ran round the south, east, and north sides of the Castle, enclosing a large part of the hill, and there must almost certainly have been a defence of some sort on the crest of the hill on the west side also. The palisade was probably partly a wall of stone, and partly a rampart of earth, stone, and turf, surmounted by a strong wooden defence. After the battle of Harlaw, the Earl of Mar was ordered to build a new castle, and a castle of considerable strength was erected between 1412 and 1415. It continued to exist until either rebuilt or reconstructed by the Earl of Huntly about 1508. Mar's Castle was of stone, and contained a tower and two turrets. What its appearance and size were otherwise we have few means of ascertaining, but it was probably a fairly large square keep, with the tower forming one angle, and the two turrets overhanging two of the remaining angles. It was surrounded by a strong stone

wall, and the old wall which still exists on the Castle Street side of the hill may have been built at this time.

The Royal Burgh of Inverness lay, as I have just said, round the base of the Castle Hill. It formed in appearance a sort of rough cross, pretty much as its four principal streets do to-day. Castle Street and Church Street appear to have been the most important streets during this period. Castle Street, Dymisdale or Doomsdale, as it was called because the way to the Gallows Hill lay through it, extended to about the point where the two ruined houses on the east side of the street are presently situate. Church Street, known as the Kirkgate, followed the line of the present Church Street, and Bridge Street that of Bridge Street. I have come across no mention of High Street in the charters of the fifteenth century, but several of the Eastgate, so that most probably the Eastgate embraced both the present Eastgate and High Street. Now, I don't want you to run away with the idea that gate at the end of the names Kirkgate and Eastgate meant a gate. It simply meant a way or a street, as is quite apparent from the use of the word in the charters and from the Scots meaning of the word. The Kirkgate led to the Parish Church, which stood where the High Church now stands, and thereafter a rough track probably led to about where

Waterloo Bridge now is, and where ships probably unloaded. From Kirkgate, opposite the Parish Church, ran Scathegate, now Rose Street. It is generally considered to mean Herring Street, and was probably the track along which herrings were brought from the sea to the burgh. For we must remember that in the fifteenth century there were no seawalls at the Longman or elsewhere keeping back the sea, and at high water most of the flat from Innes Street to the sea, and nearly to Millburn, was under water, while what was not was simply a marsh. On the east side, indeed, the town was well protected, as far as Eastgate, by marsh and sea.

From the west side of Kirkgate the gardens of the houses sloped back to the river, there being no track of any description along the river-bank either where Bank Street and Douglas Row or Ness Bank now are. On the east side of Kirkgate there were several vennels and passages, but for the most part the gardens sloped back to the pallisade and ditch, which I shall presently describe. The houses on Kirkgate ran down to about the present Free North Church. There the grounds of the Parish Church began. The Parish Church itself stood on the site of the present High Church, and its grounds and church-yard extended to the street on the one side and to the river on the other. In the Church-yard and between the church and

the river stood a small chapel dedicated to St Giles. Separated from the Parish Church by a narrow lane—now Friar's Lane—were the lands and monastery of the Preaching Friars of the Order of St Dominic, known as the Black Friars. Their lands there extended to six acres, bounded on two sides by the river, and extending on the east to the present Chapel-Yard. When I say that their lands were bounded on two sides by the river, I do not mean the river as we know it. In the 15th century the Maggot was an island, the river flowing on both sides of it. The land so surrounded was known as the Maggat, and as early as 1240 was granted to the Black Friars, who continued to hold it down to the Reformation, and in a Charter by James V. in their favour in 1580 it is still described as an island. To the east of the Monastery of the Black Friars, and in the lands now known as the Chapel-Yard, stood St Mary's Chapel, and to the south-east of it again, somewhere near the east end of Rose Street, was the Chapel of St Thomas. These lands, be it observed, were not then, nor for several centuries afterwards, apart from the chapels and their pertinents, built upon. They were simply agricultural and pastoral lands, belonging, most of them, to the Church, and some of them to the burgh and various proprietors.

Across the river, opposite the Maggot, lay the lands of Merkinch, at that time an island, and belonging to the burgh. The Merkinch

was practically uninhabited, there being at best only a fisherman's hut or two upon it. The river in the 15th century seems to have entered the sea by two channels—by its present channel and by one which ran along the line now occupied by Abban Street, and which was known as the Nabon. Above the Merkinch, separated from it by the Nabon, and facing the Black Friars' Monastery, was the Chapel of the Green. Bridge Street in the 15th century occupied its present site, save that it ran right down to the bridge. The bridge itself was of oak, and seems to have been fairly strong. On the opposite side of the river the burgh owned a small piece of land, probably granted as a defence to the bridge, and having very likely a watchman's house upon it. Beyond that there were no buildings on the west side of the river.

High Street and East Gate ran to about the foot of Stephen's Brae, and where the Post-Office steps now are was a steep ascent to the hill above. Such, briefly, was the plan and extent of the town in the 15th century.

Now, in such an age and in such a position, it is not to be expected that the town was without defences of some kind. The Castle, of course, was its chief defence, but something more than that in such an outpost of civilisation was necessary. Accordingly, we find that the burgh was surrounded by a fosse and a palisade which served the double purpose of a defence and of marking the bounds

of the burgh. The palisade and fosse seem to have run in a straight line from about the present Waterloo Bridge along the line of Academy Street and Hamilton Street, to the corner shop, presently occupied by Mr Smith, the barber, thence to have followed the line of East Gate to about the foot of Stephen's Brae, where, turning at right angles, it went straight up the hill, and turned to the west along the top of the terrace now known as Ardenconnel Terrace, thence south-west along Hill Terrace to a point somewhere about the Institute for the Blind, where it again turned to the west, and cutting across the end of Castle Street, a little above Provost Ross's shop, joined the Castle palisade. There were no buildings, except perhaps a barn or two on the hill. The palisade itself was neither a strong nor a costly fortification. It seems to have been simply a bank of earth and turf, formed probably by the digging of the fosse, with a wooden paling, seldom in good repair, on the top. The fosse speedily fell from its high estate. In truth, neither it nor the palisade were of much value as a defence, and as early as the fifteenth century we find it being described as "the old fosse," and being used as a receptacle for the town's refuse. Indeed, it very soon came to be known as the Foul Pool.

Such, then, was the town and its defences. What were its approaches? I confess this is a question of some difficulty. We know that roads were few and bad, and we also know

that the main road ran along the coast from Berwick to Inverness. But where did it enter the town? I cannot believe that it followed the present road from Inverness to Allanfeearn, as it is pretty certain that in the fifteenth century the sea washed the foot of the terrace along the base of which the railway line to Nairn runs, and that the space from the end of East Gate to the Hut of Health was little better than a marsh. On the other hand, we have several references to the King's highway running to the King's Mill on the Hill, and the Post-Office steps were in quite recent times a steep brae, known to an older generation as the Market Brae, running into the town, and I am inclined to think that in the period which we are considering the approach to the town from the south was by Cradlehall, Culcabock, Kingsmills, and the Market Brae, where it joined the East Gate and the Castle Raat—Hamilton Street.

There does not seem to have been a main entrance to the town at the Castle Street end, but a rough track ran from there along the line of Argyle Street and Porterfield to the Claypots, and thence to the Gallows Hill, which was the piece of land still unoccupied on the left side of Muirfield Road, before you come to the gravel pit. The bridge, of course, formed the chief entrance on the west side of the town, but as there were such things as bridge dues, more use was probably made of the ford at Friars' Shott, to



which Friars' Lane led. There was also the entrance from the sea by the Scatbegate, which was probably used almost entirely by fishermen. It must be remembered, however, that there were no roads, properly speaking, to the north of Inverness in the fifteenth century, and that even the great road to the south would not nowadays be dignified by any better appellation than that of a rough cart track.

The question now arises, what manner of town was built upon the site I have described? In determining the answer to that question, we have not much direct evidence to go upon. No building or ruin has come down to us from that time save a solitary pillar, and the effigy of a knight in armour, in Grey Friars' Church-yard. But if there is no direct evidence, there is a considerable amount of indirect evidence which will bear consideration. And the chief of that indirect evidence is the position and importance of the town. I do not think that, relatively speaking, Inverness was nearly so rich or so important after the Reformation as it was before. True, in mediæval times, it was neither so large nor so rich as many of the southern burghs, but it was, nevertheless, a place of great importance. It was the main outpost of civilisation, and of the Royal Government in the Highlands. It was the headquarters of the Government for the whole North of Scotland from Caithness to Elgin. Alone in the Highlands it had the

privilege of foreign trade, and so the whole export trade of the Highlands passed through the hands of its burgesses. The King and his Court frequently visited it. Parliament sometimes met there. It was the rallying place in turn for both Highland and Royal armies when the Highlands were up in arms. The Governors of its Castle were nearly always men high in position and influence. And we find inscribed among the names of its burgesses names of men of noble birth and standing. It was well supplied with churches, and possessed a monastery, and in many old charters and deeds we find evidence that its burgesses were men of wealth. In spite of its stormy history, its frequent burnings and plunderings, it prospered, and there never seems to have been any lack of burgesses of ability and spirit. Inverness was indeed in the fifteenth century the capital of the Highlands in a sense in which it has never since been.

The average Scottish burgh of the period was little more than a huddle of small and poorly built houses, the better class dwellings built of wood, and the rest, for the most part, a jumble of clay and stone and turf, with a roof of divots or thatch. Inverness, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, was, from its position and importance, I am inclined to think, rather superior to the lowland burghs. During the greater part of the fourteenth century, it had enjoyed peace and prosperity, and, as we have just seen, it was a consider-

able religious as well as legal centre. The Parish Church was a handsome building, and seems to have been rather larger than the present High Church. It was built probably in the early part of the fourteenth century, and stood down to 1770, so that it must have been a building of much solidity. It consisted of nave, with north and south aisles and choir, and was dedicated to St Mary. Unfortunately, William the Lion had granted the church in memory of Thomas à Becket to the Abbey of Aberbrothoc, which drew its revenues and persistently starved it. It is well to keep in mind that St Mary's Chapel, which stood in the present Chapel-Yard, was quite distinct and separate from the Parish Church, though both were dedicated to St Mary. That has been a fruitful source of confusion in the past. Then, besides the Parish Church, there was the Dominican Monastery, which was, of course, built of stone, and seems to have been a large and handsome structure. There were also the various chapels already mentioned, one of which, the Chapel of the Green, was of considerable size, and all of which, we may infer from the ruins of contemporary church buildings in other parts of the Highlands, were well built of stone and lime. So the burgesses of Inverness could not have been altogether ignorant of stone and lime and of architecture. It is quite possible, therefore, that the houses of one or two of the wealthier burgesses may have been

built of stone. I think, however, that most of the houses of the wealthier classes at the beginning of the fifteenth century were built of timber, and that they were large, handsome, and comfortable. My reason for that belief is this. There was plenty of timber in the neighbourhood of Inverness, much more so than in the lowlands—the burgh had the right of cutting timber in the forests of Moray, and in all the King's forests in the district—and Inverness was also the centre of a considerable timber trade. We do not find in the Exchequer Rolls any evidence of timber being exported, but we do find evidences in these rolls, in the register of the Privy Council, and in the Acts of the Scottish Parliament, that there was such a trade in Inverness. The following quotation from the register of the Privy Council will suffice:—

“That in all times bygone, the use and consuetude has been that indwellers of the Highlands have brought and conveyed timber to the burghs next adjacent by the rivers, waters, and lochs, having their course to the same as may be seen by St Johnston, Inverness, and divers other burghs.” (II. 500-1.)

The same register is also the authority for the statement that timber and cattle were the two staple and profitable industries of the Highlands. (Ibid.) Taken in conjunction with the fact that alike in Scotland and England, and on the Continent, the period was one of wooden buildings, this gives us our

timber houses, and we may reasonably infer from the importance of the burgh, and the comparative wealth and position of a number of its inhabitants, that the houses were, in comparison with the lowland burghs, where for one thing timber was dear and scanty, fairly large and comfortable, and of some architectural beauty. That assertion, of course, applies only to the wealthier burgesses, and they formed only a small part of the population, which throughout the fifteenth century never probably rose much above 2000—a fairly large population for a town of those days. The ordinary burgesses, the smaller merchants and traders, contented themselves with plain wooden houses, or with houses of clay and rubble, roofed with thatch or divot. The large majority of the population, however—probably four-fifths—were not burgesses. The burgesses were mostly descendants of Flemings and Saxons, who, by the grant of certain privileges, had been prevailed upon, at a period two or three centuries prior to the period with which we are dealing, to take up their abode in the town, and to form a loyal, a law-abiding, and a trading community around the Castle, which stood as the symbol of Royal authority in the turbulent and only half-conquered region of the Highlands. In return for their privileges, these burgesses gave military service to the Crown, formed a garrison within the burgh—the service of watching and warding, as it was called—and paid certain small dues

to the Royal Exchequer. Their privileges and their duties descended to their heirs, and they had the power of conferring the position of burghs—i.e., the freedom of the burgh—upon such as they considered fit and proper persons. What these privileges were we shall presently consider. What I wish to point out meantime is that they formed a class by themselves, the ruling, wealthy, burgher class, which we so often meet in Scottish history. In Inverness they formed about one-fifth of the population. The other four-fifths were persons of all sorts and conditions, mainly of the poorest class—labourers, fishers, servants, broken men from the clans, and beggars. The habitations of these may be briefly described as huts—huts of clay and rubble, huts of turf and wattle, huts of loose stones and divots.

Now, how were the population and the buildings distributed throughout the town? This again we have no direct means of ascertaining, but it must have been somewhat as follows. The houses of the burgesses were built on both sides of the streets, which were very narrow, very rough and uneven, and often plentifully covered with refuse. There was, of course, absolutely nothing of the nature of a paved street. It was simply the rough ground, trodden down and occasionally levelled or cleared in a haphazard kind of way. From the main streets ran passages and vennels, on which also the houses of many of the burgesses were built, and in which,

too, were the dwellings of the poorer classes. In fact, the huts of the poorer classes often stood cheek by jowl, even in the main streets, with the houses of the wealthiest burghesses, the reason being that the servants and dependants simply had their dwellings alongside or behind those of their masters. Castle Street was the most crowded and also the oldest street of the town, from its proximity to the Castle and the protection it afforded. It abounded in vennels and passages, and seems to have been more especially the district of the armourers and glovemakers, always to be found in a mediæval town. Along both sides of Church Street houses were built, and at the corner of it and Bridge Street the Tolbooth was erected about the middle of the century. Off Church Street ran one or two vennels, but it was not nearly so crowded as Castle Street, and the gardens and grounds of its houses sloped to the river on the one side, and to the fosse on the other. The dyers, the tanners, and the maltsters preponderated in Church Street, the foulness of the fosse being materially aided by the discharge from their establishments. From Church Street the Black Vennel ran back almost to the palisade, and between the vennel and High Street ran numerous passages. That part was probably almost as crowded as Castle Street.

Bridge Street seems to have been the fashionable part of the town. One peculiarity it had. Its south side was not built

upon land belonging to the burgh, but to the Castle. In the charters it is described as "part of our Castle Hill of Inverness," and some at least of its charters were granted by the King himself. Several families of noble lineage dwelt there. High Street and East Gate were in all likelihood the abode of the merchants proper—that is, of the men who did not manufacture, but who simply bought and sold, and who were probably the wealthiest and certainly the most important class in the burgh. The East Gate, as both High Street and East Gate seem to have been called, led direct to the market place, or rather to the market cross, which almost certainly stood on the site of the present Exchange, for the whole street was in reality the market place. In front of the houses and protruding into the street were the booths of the merchants, on which their wares were exposed for sale. Nearly all the houses in the burgh were low, those of the poorer classes being not much higher than a man, and there was no regularity or design in either position or arrangement. In Castle Street and the East Gate particularly they were huddled as closely together as possible. In Church Street the gardens at the back on both sides of the street were of some extent, but on the side that sloped to the palisade and fosse, they were mainly used in pursuit of their owners' business, at least in the part between the Black Vennel and where Queen's Gate now is. On the opposite side



of the street the gardens sloped to the river, and as the value of the fishing forbade the pollution of the water, we may assume that some of them at least were cultivated, though the probability is that most of them were merely waste ground, and were used as yards, or as the adjuncts of their owners' numerous pig-styes.

Such, then, is a brief and rough description of what Inverness looked like at the beginning of the fifteenth century. Now, I wish you particularly to observe that I say at the beginning of the fifteenth century. And my reason is this. From the time of the War of Independence, Inverness had enjoyed peace and prosperity. It had been able, therefore, to make progress, and to attain to a degree of comfort and to a feeling of comparative security. Its buildings were consequently more solidly constructed, with an eye to permanence, and probably also with an eye to some degree of elegance. But unfortunately the period of peace did not last. The town, as we shall see later, was burnt almost to the ground in 1411, that is, the town proper, not the churches and religious buildings, and its history during the remainder of the century was a very stormy one. From 1411 onwards therefore it was a town of much ruder appearance than it was when the century opened. Its importance was as great, but the air of permanence and comfort had to a

large extent disappeared. Its buildings would be neither so large nor so well finished, and there would be little attempt at embellishment; while, after the second burning in 1429, we may be fairly confident that it became simply a burgh of rude wooden buildings and rough clay and rubble houses, and that all outward appearance of wealth and comfort had vanished.

## CHAPTER II.

LIFE IN INVERNESS IN THE FIFTEENTH  
CENTURY.

WHAT manner of people lived in this old mediæval town? What were their occupations, their modes of living, their names, their privileges? These questions I shall endeavour now to answer. Let us take their privileges first. Four-fifths of the population, as we have seen, were Celts. These had no privileges, except that they were to a certain extent under the protection of the privileged burghers. Why these burghers were privileged we have already seen. Their privileges were much desired and jealously guarded. The burgesses themselves alone had the right to admit strangers to their charmed circle, and then generally a large sum had to be paid for admission. In the first place, the burgesses had the sole right of free buying and selling within the burgh and its territory. The people of the surrounding districts were by law bound to sell their produce and their goods within the

burgh, and to pay a tax on each article they thus brought in. These were the petty customs. But that was not all. The "outland men," as they were called, had to bring whatever they had for sale to the Market Cross, and there have it examined by the bailies, or by an officer appointed for the purpose, and its price fixed. Then the seller had to expose it in open market; that is, he had to take his stand in High Street on the market day, and within only market hours, along with his brethren, and there expose his wares to sale. Then, again, the burgesses of Inverness had the monopoly of foreign trade in the North of Scotland. All goods for export had to be brought to Inverness, pay the petty custom on entering, and thereafter be sold to a burgess of the town, who alone could export them. The burgesses, too, had the privilege of free trade throughout the kingdom, though the roads were so bad and the means of internal intercourse so primitive, that this, perhaps, was not a privilege of very great value. But above and beyond all these, the burgesses were the only class who had any recognised legal rights within the burgh, with the exception, of course, of the Church, and of all who were in any way in the service of the Government. The burgesses were therefore the real rulers of the burgh. The provost and bailies were judges and officials with very full powers, and alto-

gether the community was regarded as existing only for the benefit of the privileged burgesses. Down to 1469 the provost, bailies, and council were elected by the burgesses, but thereafter an Act of the Scottish Parliament decreed that the retiring council should elect its own successors. Thus we see that the privileges of the burgesses of Inverness were considerable, and it is not surprising that men of rank and position were often found among them, and that individual burgesses frequently amassed considerable wealth.

Among the burgesses themselves there were many class distinctions. There was a long and bitter antagonism between the guilds and the crafts. A guild was an association of the merchants of a town, and such was its power and organisation that it practically controlled the government of the town and the business of the burgh. Its members were merchants only, that is, burgesses who bought and sold. No artisan or handicraftsman could be admitted to the guild, and butchers, bakers, surgeons, and barbers were also shut out. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, however, the artisans and handicraftsmen had formed themselves likewise into associations known as the crafts, and though their power was at first small, by the end of the fifteenth century they had forced many concessions from

the guilds. These, then, were the two great divisions into which the burges class was divided, but every trade, moreover, formed a sort of small community by itself. Men who followed the same calling dwelt in the same quarter of the town, and thus the tie which bound followers of the same trade together was materially strengthened. I have already indicated where the chief of these trades were centred, but in addition to the merchants in the Eastgate, the armourers and glovers in the Doomsdale, and the tanners, maltsters, and dyers in Kirkgate, there were shoemakers, hammermen, fleshers, bakers, and divers others scattered in groups throughout the town.

Now, what did the merchants deal in? The principal exports were herring, salmon, hides, and skins, and these, as we have seen, passed through the hands of the merchants. There was also a considerable trade in wool and timber, though they do not seem to have formed a staple export from Inverness, but to have been used rather for home consumption. Then there was, of course, the buying and selling of the coarse cloths, and the natural products of the country, of richer cloths and goods from Flanders, of French wines, which formed a considerable import, and of ale. In fact, a merchant bought and sold everything he could lay his hands on, but he did not soil these hands by actually making anything.

There were in Inverness, however, two other small classes which cannot be passed by. These were the garrison in the Castle and the churchmen. The garrison in the Castle was probably not very large, but its captain was next in importance in the town to the provost and bailies. He was usually a cadet of the family whose head for the time being was Governor of the Castle, though the Earl of Mar, subsequent to the battle of Harlaw, seems to have resided in the Castle as Governor, and to have made Inverness his headquarters. The clergy were numerous. There was the vicar of Inverness, an important man in the community, the curate, and the parish clerk. There were also six altar chaplains connected with the Parish Church, and in the Monastery there was a prior, a sub-prior, and three brethren, and occasionally there was a chaplain in the Castle. There were at least four manse, those of the vicar and of St Peter's, in Church Street; of St Michael, in the Eastgate; and of the Chapel of the Green, near St Mary's Chapel (which stood, you will remember, in the Chapel-Yard). . . So that Inverness was even better provided for spiritually than it is to-day. In this connection it is interesting to observe that benefactions by the burgesses to the Church were not uncommon, and that these were usually made on condition that prayers were said for the souls of the donor and his relations.

Before I proceed to give you a brief description of the ordinary life of the inhabitants of Inverness in the fifteenth century, it may interest you to know the names of some of the burgesses of that distant time. You will observe that several of these are obviously taken from their owner's trade. In the earlier part of the century Rede is a name very frequently met with, and other names are Waus, Scott, Pollock, Cuthbert, Pilche, Qhelwrycht, Qwhyte, Makferry, Sutor, Androuson, Peddock, and Grant. As we proceed further, the names of Waus and Rede are most common, and those of Skynnar, Barbour, Donaldson, Duff, Johnson, Finlay, and Fleming often occur. Other names, chosen at random for their quaintness, are Tailzeour, John Nale, Morice Maccabon, John Campsy, John Ceras, Wm. de Botha, Eufamia Macculloch, George Ferchard, and Hugh Blont. Often men are simply designated by their Christian names, as for example John, son of Thomas; and "Androuson," which I have quoted, is, from its spelling, evidently simply Andrew's son.

The first thing that would strike us if we were transported back to the Inverness of the fifteenth century, and after we had become accustomed to its quaintness and its dirt, would undoubtedly be the simplicity of its life. There was no electric light in those days. The best artificial light was given by



waxen candles, but these were dear, and were used only to present to the altars of the Church when a burgess felt in a particularly pious mood, or was under the necessity of fulfilling the vow he had made when suffering from illness or beset by danger. The light usually used, when light was necessary, was a fir candle—i.e., a torch of fir-wood. But the burgh rule was "early to bed and early to rise." Lights in a community of wooden houses and thatched roofs were dangerous, so everybody was supposed to go to bed with the daylight and to rise with it. As the streets were, from their uneven condition alone, dangerous after dark, and as it was strictly forbidden to carry an uncovered light from one house to another, the hours of daylight came naturally to be the hours of wakefulness, and the hours of darkness the hours of sleep. As darkness drew on, one man came forth from each burgess's house, armed with two weapons and a head-piece, to fulfill the duty of watching and warding. He was told off either to patrol the streets or to join one of the parties going to Ballifeary or Clachnaharry, to keep watch lest any marauders should endeavour to approach the town under cover of night. Those who were not required to watch or ward betook themselves, in the winter months especially, when a man could hardly go to bed at five o'clock, to one of the

taverns, and there held high revelry with their neighbours, or, if they were not riotously inclined, to a seat by their own blazing fire of peat and wood, and so early to bed. Parliament said taverns were to close at nine. They closed when the last roysterer had betaken himself to the night air. At daybreak the call of the watcher awoke the inhabitants, and the daily round began. There was perhaps the head court of the burgh to attend, which fell at Michaelmas, and at which every burgess had to be present, under penalty of a fine of four pennies for absence without lawful excuse. Or it may have been Saturday, the weekly market day, whereupon the burgess took a walk, perhaps, to the burgh gate, to see that the officer was in his place to exact the petty customs from the men from the country, and probably smiled to himself when he observed an "outland man" climbing, with scant ceremony, over a broken part of the palisade, or crawling through one of its many gaps. If he had an eye to business he did not inform the official. He went and struck a cheap bargain with the outland man. Then, well satisfied with his bargain, he proceeded to his booth, possibly being deposited in the dirty street by a hurrying pig on the way. For pigs abounded in the burgh, and wandered where they would. Every burgess and most of the inhabitants kept at least one.

Or it may have been one of the many holidays which the mediæval Church enjoined. There were about fifty of them in the year. So he perhaps betook himself to a field outside the town to smile at the efforts of the ardent few who took upon themselves to obey the Act of Parliament anent practising with the bow and arrow. More probably he found himself listening to the music of the town band—for every burgh had a band of some sort—criticising the energy of the big drum, the laziness of the wee drum, and the general incapacity of the players on the pipes, the fiddle, the trumpet, the cornet, and the whistle. If he were young and energetic, he might help to kick a blown-up bladder about the street, while if the day were evil, the citizen would find his way, without much difficulty, to his own favourite tavern, there to play backgammon or dice, discuss the shortcomings of the Church, the State, and his neighbours, and partake plentifully of the French wine and the home-brewed ale, and perhaps also of the more uncommon *aqua vitae*. For tavern drinking was a very common form of amusement in those days.

Or perhaps the annual Martinmas Fair, on the land at the top of the present Culduthel Brae, was being held, and it behoved him to be present; for on that day no petty customs were due, and all the countryside, from far and near, hastened in holiday attire to the burgh.

Once in his life, perhaps, if he were a man of substance and daring, he might venture on a voyage to France to interview his correspondents there, and extend his trade, or he might even go on a pilgrimage to Rome. But first he would go to the Parish Church, and give the vicar money to pray for his safety, and, in the event of his not returning, for the peace of his soul. For in the fifteenth century a voyage by sea was beset by manifold perils. Pirates abounded, and the ships were not such as could weather very violent storms.

If it were early summer our burgess would join his fellows in an expedition to the Caiplich or to Craig-Phadraig to cut peats, carrying his weapons lest he should perchance encounter a hungry wolf, or lest the men of some neighbouring clan should dispute his right to the peats. He would probably elect to cross the river by the ford, for why should he pay bridge dues when Providence had provided a ford? Then a little later he would make one of a party to the woods of Darnaway to bring home a supply of firewood, and possibly also a few logs to cut into planks for repairs to his house, or perhaps to erect a new pig-sty. Between the time of the casting and the bringing home of the peats he would take his turn in forming one of the parties guarding them in the moss, lest some evilly disposed Celts should wish to lay in a

supply of fuel without the trouble of cutting it.

On Sundays he would attend mass, and thereafter make holiday, as was the fashion on the mediæval Sunday. On May-day he would take his part in the most popular frolic of the year, when there was an abundance of rough horse-play and "a pandemonium of riot and drunkenness at night." On Candle-mas Day he would join in the great Craftsmans' procession in honour of the Virgin Mary, and, if he were a merchant, look on at the play subsequently presented by the craftsmen.

But most important of all, once or twice in his life, he would be called upon to fulfil the military service he owed the king. Perchance a mighty army was being summoned for an invasion of England, or perhaps he had to join an expedition against his neighbours, the Highlanders. So he would don his headpiece and harness, gird on his sword and buckler, lay his spear on his shoulder, and so march out to war.

Nor must we forget his domestic duties. His children were duly sent to the monastery or to the curate of the Parish Church, to receive a smattering of learning, while his wife looked after his household affairs. If he were a merchant, he and his wife would be well dressed, and after many a grumble at the laws which prescribed different dresses

for the different classes, he would calmly set them at nought, and dress himself and his wife in clothes of considerable costliness, doubtless imported by his correspondent in Flanders. For throughout the fifteenth century the burgess, whatever else he was, took care to be well, and often sumptuously, clad.

And here I think we may say farewell to the Inverness burgess of the fifteenth century. He lived at a critical period in our national history, and at a period of transition in the world's history, when old things were passing away, and new manners of thought and of life were coming in. I have endeavoured to give you a glimpse of the town he lived in, and of how he lived, and I now propose to sketch, as briefly and as rapidly as I can, some of the leading events in the history of Inverness during the period we have been considering.

## CHAPTER III.

1400—1412.

## INVERNESS AND DONALD OF HARLAW.

To clearly understand the history of Inverness during the fifteenth century, some knowledge of the history of Scotland during the period is necessary. It was a period of continual unrest and disturbance. The kingdom was cursed by a series of minorities, during which it was governed by regents whose chief aim was the aggrandisement of themselves and their families. As each of the kings grew to manhood he had to undo the work the regent had done, to endeavour to weaken the power of the great nobles, and to strengthen the central authority. James I. began the work, and had he lived the power of the Crown would probably have been consolidated. But he was murdered, with his work but half done, and leaving only a young son, during whose minority the nobles regained their power. On reaching manhood James II. renewed his father's task, but he too was cut off with his purpose

unfinished, and another long minority undid almost all he had accomplished. Unfortunately, also, James III., when he grew up, had neither the energy nor the ability of his father. By rank misgovernment he alienated all the leading nobles, and left to his successor, James IV., a divided and turbulent kingdom, and only the shadow of Royal power. James IV., however, proved equal to the great task before him. He reduced the unruly nobles to order, broke the power of the great families, and made the Crown during his reign the real governing power in the kingdom. Thus the history of Scotland during the fifteenth century may be briefly summarised as a prolonged struggle for supremacy between the crown and the nobles. The Highlands, as a consequence, were practically independent, the royal authority often for long periods existing only in name, and only actually making itself felt during the brief intervals of the triumph of the royal party. That helps to explain the many private wars, threatening sometimes the very existence of Scotland as an independent nation, which time and again convulsed the Highlands throughout the century.

But there were two other reasons equally cogent. In the first place, in Scotland, feudalism had obtained a much stronger grip than in England, and in the Highlands it had found in the clan system a system which had



one element in common with itself. Both emphasised the connection between lord and vassal at the expense of the connection between king and subject. Thus the power of the great chiefs was materially strengthened by the growth of feudalism, while at the same time the loyalty of their vassals became even more personal to the chiefs themselves and practically non-existent to the king. The result, of course, was that in a question between king and chief the Highlander always followed his chief. And neither the Highlander nor the Highland chief had yet come to regard himself as an integral part of the Scottish nation. He had perforce to obey the royal authority when it was strong enough to make itself felt. But only when and because it made itself felt. That is the important thing to remember; and that is the explanation of the other cause of Highland turbulence—the intrigues with England. England had large interests on the continent, the protection of which required that she should have either a friendly or an innocuous Scotland on her borders. Scotland, owing to her alliance with France, rejected all English overtures, and England was consequently driven to adopt the other policy, and she adopted it deliberately, to keep Scotland weak by means of internal troubles. This she did by encouraging the Lords of the Isles and the Douglasses in their

grievances against the Crown, and on several occasions the Lords of the Isles rose in rebellion as a direct result of the intrigues and the promises of help of England. If these facts are kept in mind it will enable us to understand why it was that warfare on a large scale was so common in the Highlands in the fifteenth century, and why Inverness had such a stormy and troubled history.

The first episode in the history of Inverness in the fifteenth century to which I would direct attention is the legend of the battle of Drumderfit, which is popularly supposed to have taken place in the year 1400, and which figures in almost every book relating to Inverness. The legend briefly is this. The Lord of the Isles approached Inverness with a marauding force, and, encamping on the north side of Kessock Ferry, threatened the town with fire and sword unless he were bought off. The Provost—his name even is given in the legend, viz., Junor—asked for a day and a night's delay, and on this being granted, caused to be carried to the enemy's camp a large quantity of the very strongest liquors. The result may be imagined. Donald's men got hopelessly drunk, and in the watches of the night the burgesses fell upon them, and put the sleeping Celts, all save one, most gallantly to the sword. When or how this legend sprang up we do not know. One thing, however, we do

know. It is absolutely untrue. There is not a vestige of historical fact to support it, while on the other hand there is plenty evidence of a negative kind to controvert it.

The year 1411 is the first date of any historic importance in the history of Inverness in the fifteenth century, and it is an important date in Highland and Scottish history also. It is the year of the battle of Harlaw. With the events which led to the Lord of the Isles' rebellion we are not here concerned. We are concerned only with the part played in it by Inverness. When we meet Donald of Harlaw he is marching at the head of his host from Dingwall to Inverness. The news of his coming has preceded him, and in the burgh all is terror and confusion. One man of daring there is, however, a burgess lately admitted, one John Cumine of Earnside, in Moray. He seizes his two-handed sword, buckles on his armour, places his headpiece on his head, and, alone, takes his stand beyond the westernmost defences of the bridge. The Islemen advance, and right lustily does Cumine do his duty, so that, says a quotation from John Major in the Wardlaw Manuscript, "Had there been ten such men in Inverness, neither bridge nor city would have been burnt." As it was, however, his resistance availed nothing. The bridge, "the famousest and finest of oak in Britain" (Wardlaw MS.) was

seized and burnt, and the town lay open to the enemy. The Castle was promptly seized, and Donald's vassals and the men of the friendly clans summoned from far and near. Ten thousand men flocked to his standard, armed for the most part with bows and arrows, Lochaber axes, daggers, and swords, clad only in kilts and plaids, and bare of leg and foot. The town was burned and plundered, "because they would not rise and concur with him," says the Wardlaw Manuscript, and then, marshalling his host, Donald marched away to Harlaw.

The historians of Clan Donald say (vol. 1, page 155), "The partial or total burning of the town of Inverness . . . . . ought without any hesitation to be taken with a very large grain of salt." Why? Because the historians of Clan Donald hold a brief for their clan presumably. For they condescend to adduce no fact or argument in support of their view, while they quietly ignore the facts against it. That is not the way to write history, and in passing I may remark that, from the strictly historical point of view, their first volume at least is marred by their tendency to gloss over everything that reflects on their clan, and their inability to view historical events and personages in their proper perspective. That is proved by the statement just quoted. Neither Donald of Harlaw nor

his followers would have considered it any disgrace to burn and sack Inverness. They lived in the fifteenth century. Their standards of right and wrong were not those of the nineteenth. Now, what do we know of the events of 1411? The only direct statement relating to Inverness is that in the Wardlaw Manuscript, that the bridge and burgh were burned, and the quotation in that Manuscript from John Major, "Had there been ten such men in Inverness, neither city nor bridge would have been burned." I have been unable to find either that quotation or any other reference in John Major to these events, but it is quite possible, nevertheless, that some such account did exist in the time of the author of the Wardlaw Manuscript, that is, in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Then again we know that the author had access to and made use of manuscripts and documents which are no longer in existence, while in the Highlands prior to the '45 there were many bards and sennachies through whom the events of former ages were handed down. In any event, the writer of the Wardlaw Manuscript would hardly have made so direct a statement without some authority, nor would he have invented the quotation from John Major which he gives in the original Latin. It is quite possible, of course, that he may have written "John Major" in

error for some other name, but the fact remains that his assertion is founded to some extent on an earlier writer, a quotation from whom he gives

The next fact that emerges is that there was a John Cumine of Earnside, in Moray, in the fifteenth century, and in two documents of 1499 and 1514, the names of John and James Cumine of Earnside appear as witnesses in legal proceedings at Inverness, while a charter in favour of a Cuming of Earnside in 1460 is in existence. Our next fact we take from the "Clan Donald" itself. Donald seized Inverness about the first week of July, and did not leave it until the fourth week of the month had begun, by which time not less than 10,000 Highlanders had assembled. Then the "Clan Donald" does not deny that Donald's entry to the town was opposed, though only by one man, nor the fact that the burgesses refused to join Donald's standard, while it asserts, with apparent complacency, that "Donald threatened to burn the town of Aberdeen, and to put that threat into execution was, at least, one motive for the intended invasion of the Granite City," and that "when the news arrived in Aberdeen that Donald and his host were on their way to consign the town to the flames, the panic may well be conceived." At the same time, the authors

assert that "the fire and sword with which he devastated any portion of the large district of country through which he passed were not used wantonly, or merely in quest of plunder, though that was always acceptable and needful for the support of his army, but largely because he had not received the accession to his ranks which he anticipated and demanded." That really is not writing history seriously. It might have been written of a great general at the head of a disciplined army, but to write it of a Highland chief at the head of a motley host of 10,000 Highlanders in the fifteenth century is really too absurd. Well, any unprejudiced man looking to these facts, and bearing in mind the further fact that in the fifteenth century the Highlanders were as fierce and predatory in warfare as their contemporaries elsewhere, will have no hesitation in accepting as an historical fact that Inverness was burned and plundered by Donald of Harlaw and his followers in 1411. One word more to clinch the matter. The Lords of the Isles burned and plundered Inverness several times during the next hundred years, and it is very unlikely therefore that they showed it an unaccustomed leniency in 1411.

The Castle, too, seems to have been destroyed in this year. Donald probably left a garrison behind him, who, on the advance of a strong army northwards, under Albany,

after Harlaw, were compelled to evacuate it, Donald being by this time safe in the Western Isles, and the Castle too weak to stand a siege. Prior to abandoning the Castle, however, the garrison seem to have destroyed it, for the Earl of Mar, who had been appointed Justiciar of the North, was directed to rebuild it, and in 1412 received, "for the construction of a fortalice at Inverness, for the utility of the kingdom against the said Lord of the Isles," various payments which appear in the Exchequer Rolls. This Castle seems to have been completed in 1414, when he received what looks like a final payment for "his divers labours and expenses about the Castle of Inverness, £52 11s 3d." This is the Castle which I have already described at length in an earlier chapter.



## CHAPTER IV.

1412—1451.

PARLIAMENT AT INVERNESS. THE TOWN  
BURNED AND SACKED. MEN OF NOTE.  
SOCIAL HISTORY.

During the twelve years which followed the rebuilding of the Castle in 1412, the history of Inverness was uneventful. Though the Highlands were turbulent and private wars frequent, the strength of the garrison which now held Inverness ensured its security. These were the years of James I's imprisonment in England, and the years of the Regency of the Dukes of Albany. From 1420 to 1424, during the Regency of Duke Murdoch, the Highlands were in a state of continual unrest, and the Earl of Mar, who, as Justiciar of the North, had his headquarters at Inverness, occupied a position which must have given him plenty of occupation, and Inverness much to interest and excite it.

James I. returned to Scotland in 1424, and soon showed that he meant to be master in his own country. He took rigorous measures for the repression of disorder and to crush the House of Albany. These accomplished,

he turned his attention to the Highlands, and riding northward at the head of a numerous force, summoned his Parliament to meet at Inverness in the spring of 1427. The Highland chiefs particularly he ordered to be present, and they, obeying for once the royal summons, came attended each by a bodyguard of clansmen. The Parliament met most probably in the Parish Church. Thither the chiefs went practically unattended, and relying on the royal honour. But as each entered the door he was seized, hastily bound, and carried away to a safe place of imprisonment. Fifty chiefs were thus secured, and James, triumphant at the success of his ruse, is said to have composed a Latin couplet, which has been thus freely translated by Sir Walter Scott:—

“To donjon tower let the rough troop be driven,  
For death they merit by the cross of heaven.”

The small bodyguards the chiefs had brought with them were powerless. They had probably not been permitted to enter the town, and in any event were only small and unorganised units in the midst of a well armed and disciplined army. His prey secured, James took every precaution against escape. Each prisoner was placed in solitary confinement, and all communication with his friends outside strictly forbidden. Then came, with dramatic speed, the trial of some of the principal offenders. Alexander, leader of the

Clan Gorrie, John Macarthur, of the Clan Campbell, and several others of less note were tried for their lives for the part they had played in the dark doings which had recently disturbed the Highlands. There was only one possible verdict, and they were summarily executed on the Castle Hill. A few of the prisoners, having had their lesson, were then set at liberty, but most of them were distributed among the strongholds of the lowlands, there to languish for periods of varying length. Among these latter were Alexander, Lord of the Isles, who had succeeded his father, Donald of Harlaw, and his mother, Eufamia, through whom he and his father claimed the Earldom of Ross.

In August of the following year, 1428, James I. was again at Inverness. On the 28th of the month he granted a charter to the burgh, the preamble whereof runs—“Whereas on the part of our burgesses of our burgh of Inverness, it has reached our ears, by way of common complaint, that some persons dwelling within the bounds and liberty of said burgh, usurp and infringe its liberty and privilege by buying and selling merchandise or other saleable goods beyond the said burgh, to the no small loss and prejudice of our said burgh;” therefore he directs that “those inhabiting all and singular the bounds of the said burgh and liberty thereof, who have any merchandise or goods whatsoever to be sold, shall assemble

at the market place of our said burgh, and shall actually present themselves there," under pain of forfeiture of their goods to the King's use. From which it is evident that the extensive privileges of buying and selling which the burgesses possessed were only observed by non-burgesses under compulsion, and that they were often successful in setting them altogether at naught.

We may pause here to remark that the visits of the Kings in state to Inverness, which we shall often have to note throughout the century, were part of the well-considered policy of the Scottish Government. Assize Courts—Justice Ayres, as they were called—were held yearly throughout the country, and it was good policy that the King himself should as often as possible hold these Courts in the more unsettled and distant parts of the kingdom. They fulfilled a twofold purpose. They enabled the King to make frequent and imposing visits to these districts, and so impress the people with a sense of his power, and they impregnated the popular mind with the idea that the King was himself and in reality the fountainhead of justice. Another interesting fact may also be here pointed out. The royal visits to the Highlands were nearly always made in late summer or early autumn. The reasons are obvious. The rivers were then low and easily fordable, and there was plenty of hunting and sport to be obtained.

In 1429 Inverness again suffered at the hands of the Macdonalds. Alexander, Lord of the Isles, had been pardoned and released in 1427, after a short imprisonment of two months. But he burned to avenge the indignity he had suffered, and singled out Inverness as the special object of his resentment. It was in Inverness he had been so treacherously seized, and it was Inverness which was the outward and visible sign of the royal authority in the North. So he called his clansmen together to the number of 10,000, and in 1429 marched on Inverness, burned and sacked the burgh, and laid waste the Crown lands. But the Castle defied him, though he made desperate efforts to take it, and on the approach of a royal army he was compelled to retreat, leaving it still uncaptured. The Crown lands, properly so called, comprised Culcabock and part of Inshes, Castle Hill, and others, but in the devastation of 1429 all the lands in the neighbourhood of Inverness suffered, as most of them were what was known as Castle lands. These included among others Hilton, Porterfield, Aultnaskiach, Castle Lathir, Culduthel, Knocknagael, and various other lands in that direction, as well as Dochfour, Dochgarroch, Duneancroy, and several more on the opposite side of the river. That the burning and sacking of the town were effectually carried out is proved by an entry in the Exchequer Rolls remitting £52 10s of the

dues of that year "on account of the burning of said burgh by the Lord of the Isles."

To the following year probably belongs one of these bloody episodes which are so frequently met with in Highland history during the period. Briefly, the story is this. Thomas Macneil had a feud with Mowat of Freswick, and learning that Mowat was in Tain with only a small retinue, he attacked him in the Chapel of St Duthus, slew him and his followers, and burnt the chapel to the ground. The King promptly denounced Macneil as a rebel, and offered his lands and possessions to anyone who should either kill or capture him. This offer aroused the cupidity of Angus Murray, and he persuaded Macneil's two brothers, by the promise of his daughters in marriage and a share of their brother's lands, to seize Macneil and hand him over to himself. What interests us particularly is that Macneil's trial and execution took place at Inverness. It is satisfactory to add that his two brothers did not long enjoy either their ill-gotten wives or lands. The Mackays, with whom they had some connection, rose in their wrath and slew them both in battle. I only mention this episode as in some degree illustrative both of the state of the Highlands and of the importance of Inverness as a centre of government.

When the King visited Inverness in 1428,

the various northern burghs were ordered to send thither for his use certain provisions. Aberdeen failed to comply with these orders, and was fined £25, a very considerable sum in these days. In the Exchequer Rolls for 1434, that fine appears as still owing. A regard for historical truth compels me regretfully to add that the Aberdonians proved too much even for the Lord Chamberlain, and a few years later the fine was remitted.

In 1435 the man who had done so much for law and order in Inverness and the North, the Earl of Mar, died at Inverness, in all probability in the Castle which he had himself erected. He seems to have spent the greater part of the years subsequent to Harlaw as Justiciar of the North at Inverness, and Inverness he certainly made his headquarters. It is not clear whether he conducted the successful defence of the Castle in 1429 in person, but that defence was entirely due to his foresight and military sagacity. He was buried in the Monastery of the Black Friars, and it is now generally agreed that the effigy of the knight in armour in the erroneously termed Greyfriars' Churchyard is his.

We learn from the Exchequer Rolls of this same year that the three towers of the Castle were covered with "duvate." We find also an echo of the burning of 1429 in a further remission of £42 18s, because of the damage done by the Lord of the Isles.

An event of much interest in the social history of Inverness occurred in 1436. In that year Cristina Makferry feued "to the burgesses and community" of Inverness the piece of land at the corner of Bridge Street and Church Street upon which the steeple is built, for "two pence of usual money in name of blench farm if asked, and to our Lord the King five pence annually." I wonder if "our Lord the King" still receives his fivepence annually! This charter is backed, "Ye charter of ye Tolbuth," and on the piece of ground thus feued the burgh Tolbooth was built. It was thus in close proximity to both the market place and the Castle, and it is probably to the latter fact that we owe the preservation of such burgh records as have survived. They could easily in time of danger be hurriedly conveyed to the Castle.

James I. was murdered in 1437, and shortly thereafter the Earldom of Ross was restored to Alexander, Lord of the Isles. In the following year Alexander was appointed Justiciar of the North. The Castle of Inverness, which he had unsuccessfully besieged in 1429, thus passed into his keeping, and he held courts and administered justice in the town which he had destroyed less than ten years before. He probably owed these honours to his friendship with Douglas, who in 1437 had been appointed lieutenant of the kingdom for the young James II. It



was certainly a strange turn of fortune, and furnishes us with a good illustration of how great a part the personality of the King and of his Regents played in the history of the times. Inverness, however, seems to have remained prosperous and peaceful in spite of the fears which the appointment of the new Justiciar no doubt gave rise to.

We have now come to a date which is in some ways the most interesting in the history of Inverness in the 15th century. In 1439 there appears the first record of Inverness sending a representative to Parliament. It is fairly certain that Inverness was represented in the national assembly before that date, but there is no record of the fact. In 1439 Sir Alexander Livingstone, who by that time was virtually Regent, summoned a Parliament to meet at Stirling, and to that Parliament Andrew Rede, burgess and commissary of Inverness, went as representative of the burgh. So Andrew Rede is the first recorded member of Parliament for Inverness. He seems to have been a man of great importance in the burgh. His name continually occurs in charters and deeds during the first half of the century. He acted as one of the "custumarii" of the burgh; that is, he collected and intromitted with the Great Custom of the Burgh, and delivered up at intervals an account of his receipts and expenses to the

Chamberlain. It was a post of importance and honour, and he seems to have filled it for a long period. He was also a bailie of the town, and in 1440 we find him appending his seal to a deed as Provost, an office which he filled for more than ten years till his death in 1451. He was, further, for these days, a much travelled man. We find him on several occasions rendering his account to the Chamberlain at Perth and Stirling. He was also the owner of a considerable amount of property, and altogether a burghess of substance and honour, well fitted to be the first known representative of the Highland capital in Parliament. Indeed, the Rolls show that his services won approval in the highest quarters, for in 1445 the Bailies are directed by the King to pay the sum at the credit of their account, viz., £12 15s 0½d, to "Andrew Rede, Provost of said burgh, in part recompense of his services and labours willingly given." Early in 1451 he seems to have been seized with a severe illness, in consequence of which he made his will, and gifted a large part of his property to the Church to endow a perpetual chaplaincy in the Parish Church to the altar of St Catherine. The Bishop of Moray, on the 6th of March, "on the request and devout supplication" of his widow, appointed Lord Thomas, of Tain, as chaplain, "to perform there forever divine worship for the souls of the most serene prince and our lord, Lord James, by divine clemency King

of Scots, and of Queen Mary, his spouse, and for the souls of the late Andrew Rede, burgess of Inverness, and Marjory Grant, his spouse, and for the souls of their predecessors and successors, and of all the faithful dead." So Andrew Rede was a devout son of the Church, as well as a worthy and wealthy burgess, a typical specimen of the best class of Scottish citizen in the 15th century.

Two families long connected with Inverness make their first recorded appearance about this time. In 1440 John Bathane sells to his cousin Alexander Waus a particate, that is a rood of land on the side of Castle Street under the Castle Hill, for an annual rent of "three shillings of the usual money of Scotland." This, by the way, is the deed to which Andrew Rede affixed his seal as Provost. The Wauses flourished exceedingly in the burgh for several hundred years. Many of the family found seats on the bench. Some became vicars of the Church. One was chaplain of St Michael's, and another parish clerk. We find members of the family practising as notaries, and one at least filling the office of commissary, while burgesses of the name are very frequently met with. Eight years later, in 1448, John Robertson grants a particate of land on the east side of Castle Street to William Michael. This Robertson is the first of the family of Inshes of whom there is record, and it is interesting

to observe that the piece of his land which he describes as bounding on the south the piece of land above-mentioned, remained in the Inshes family until well on in the 18th century, and is still known to all lovers of old Inverness by virtue of the old gateway, the remains of which, surmounted by the family crest and motto, are still to be seen at the far end of one of the old closes in Castle Street. The Robertsons of Inshes wrote their name large on the history of Inverness and its neighbourhood, and it is only within living memory that the family became extinct in the male line, while many of the old families who still live in Inverness and the surrounding district are descended from them on the female side.

In 1442 Alexander, Lord of the Isles, "Justiciar of the part north of the water of Forth," spent part of the autumn in Inverness, and in August and October granted deeds there in favour of William, Thane of Cawdor, and Alexander de Seton, Lord of Gordon, afterwards Earl of Huntly.

The charters and deeds which have been so often quoted in these articles, and from which we learn so much of our burgh history, were all written in mediæval Latin or Norman French. But we have now reached the period during which Latin was gradually ousted from its place as the sole language of the lawyer and of the law court, and Norman

French from its proud position as the badge of the nobility. Accordingly, it is of much interest to find two deeds of the year 1449 relating to Inverness written in the language of the country, and this is the more remarkable as prior to that date there is, so far as I have been able to ascertain, no trace of any deed relating to the burgh in the national tongue. The first of these is dated 20th July 1449, and deals with the conveyance of an acre of land beyond Rose Street. As it is of interest not only as the first of its kind, but also because of the quaintness of its phraseology, and because of the contemporary glimpse it gives us of the national language of the time, I cannot refrain from quoting a large part of it. It begins:—

"To all this charter sall here or see,  
Androw Grame, burges of Inuernys, sends  
gretyng in godde ay lestande (everlasting),  
wit ze me, with ye consent of Eby, Donald's  
dochter, and Donale, his son and ayre, to  
haff gyffen, gravntide (granted), and be tityll  
off sell yng to haff latyn, ande als be yis my  
present charter to haff confirmyt to my traist  
and lele neichbour, Wilzame off Buch, burges  
of ye said burch, ane akir off arabill lande  
lyande in ye Garbreide off ye said burch,  
betwix ye lande of umquhyle Scher Patrick  
off ye Warlaw, to ye est on ye ta part, ande  
ye lande off ye rude anterior off ye Paroche  
Kirk off Inuernys, to ye west on ye toyer

part, ye ta ende extendande to ye lande off quhyllum Wilzame Pilche to ye south and ye Scagate (Rose Street) to ye north for a certane soume off mone beforhande to me thancfully nowmeryt ande pait, of ye quhilk I halde me fully content and in myne eyse convertide: To be haldyn and hade ye said akir off feilde lande with ye pertenants to ye forsaide Wilzame his ayrs and assigneis fra me, myne ayrs, ande assigneis for euir, be all yair richt merkis, aulde ande devisit, frely, quytly, halely, honorabilly, wele, ande in pece, with all commoditeis, fredomys, aysiaments, ande rychtwis pertenants, quhat-someuir yai be, yat to ye forsaide akir off felde lande with ye pertenants, als wele nocht nemnyt as nemnyt (named), pertenys or rychtwisly may pertene ony manner of ways tyme to cum;" and so on. The deed concludes:—

"In witness off ye quhilk thing my sele to yis present charter is hungyn, ande for ye mare sekerness off ye quhilk thing ye saide Eby ande Donalde, as for yair pairt, has procurit ye sele off a discret man, Thome Cuthbert, yat tyme ane off ye bailzeis off ye said burch . . . . ande to yis present has gert be hungyn at Inuernys ye twenty day off July, ye zer off Godde a thowsande four hundreth fourty ande nyne yers: Witnes discret men (here follow several names) with oyers syndri yerto callit and specialty prayt."

Several things worth noticing may be pointed out in this interesting old deed. We have, for almost the last time, the old spelling of Inverness—Inuernys—which is the form in almost all the deeds and documents prior to this date, but which in no long time thereafter became Ennirnesse, Innerness, Envernesse, and at last Invernesse. It may be noted also that two of the parties to the deed are described simply as "Eby, Donald's dochter, and Donale, his son and ayre," and that one of the bailies in 1449 was Thomas Cuthbert, presumably a member of the well-known family of Castlehill, who by that date were settled as burgesses in Inverness, though when they acquired the lands of Castlehill is still a moot point. The language of the deed differs very little from the broad Scots of the present day, and is for the most part, with the exception of the legal words, pure Anglo-Saxon. Wilzame off Buch, to whom the lands are made over, is William of Bught, and we have thus another example of how the old names have stood the test of centuries.

## CHAPTER V.

1451—1476.

## FURTHER REBELLIONS OF THE LORD OF THE ISLES. THE CASTLE AND ITS CONSTABLE.

**I**N 1449 Alexander, Lord of the Isles, died, and was succeeded by his son John, who was still a minor. From the date of Alexander's appointment as Justiciar of the North in 1438 down to the day of his death, the Highlands had been peaceful. But that state of matters did not long survive him. In 1450 began the great trial of strength between the house of Stewart on the one hand and the Douglasses and their allies, the Crawford, on the other. John of the Isles, instigated by his cousin-german, Donald Balloch, one of the tried and veteran warriors of the clan, joined himself to Douglas and Crawford, and entered into a solemn league with them. In 1451 he collected a large army, and, marching on Inverness, seized the Castle, and the Castles of Urquhart and Ruthven. His father-in-law, Sir James Livingstone, had succeeded in escaping to the North, when



the other members of his family perished on the scaffold in the previous year, and him John appointed Governor of Urquhart Castle, and shortly afterwards of Inverness Castle. In Inverness Castle he placed a strong garrison, and gathered in it a large quantity of military stores. He then seems to have been content to protect the new possessions he had so forcibly acquired, and his appearance of power at all events was so formidable that no serious attempt was made to crush him. He continued to hold the northern Castles, and down at least to 1454, as we learn from an entry in the Exchequer Rolls, Livingstone was Governor of Inverness Castle. In 1455 the power of the Douglasses was broken at Arkinholme, and the Lord of the Isles, after an attempted naval raid on the West, wisely made his peace with James, and was received into the royal favour. Shortly thereafter the Castles and lordships of Inverness and Urquhart were annexed to the Crown, "not to be given away in fee or frank tenement to any, of whatever estate or degree." But in the following year Urquhart was restored to John, and until the death of James he remained a staunch supporter of the Crown.

In 1454 occurred the battle at Clachnaharry between the Mackintoshes and the Munros, which the monument erected by one of the Duffs of Muirtown commemorates.

Like many of the old legendary clan battles, its authenticity is now challenged, but in the absence of any clear proof to the contrary, it may be here set down. The authority followed is an account by Mackintosh of Kinrara, written 200 years after the event, which the curious may find in full in "Invernessiana," or, along with various other versions, in the "History of the Mackenzies." John Munro was the second son of Hugh Munro of Foulis. On his return journey from a visit he had paid to the South, he was ill-treated by the inhabitants of Strathardle, in Athole, and his pride severely ruffled. Hurrying home, he roused his clansmen, and with 200 men descended on Strathardle. His movements were rapid, and before his enemies fully realised their danger, he had ravaged the countryside and carried off their cattle. So far all was well; but as he was crossing the Findhorn he was met by Malcolm Oig, grandson of Mackintosh of Mackintosh, accompanied by a number of the Clan Chattan, who claimed a share of the plunder. Munro offered him twenty-four cows and a bull, but Malcolm Oig's pride refused so small a share, and he demanded one-third. Whereupon Munro scornfully proceeded on his way. Malcolm, righteously indignant, called out his friends, among them the men of Petty, whom he ordered to pursue the Munros across the Ness. At Clachnaharry

John turned to bay. He sent forty men on with the booty, and with the rest awaited the attack among the rocks. A fierce fight followed, and several men were slain on each side, John himself losing an arm, and being left for dead on the field. Then honour being satisfied, the combatants drew off, John without his arm and the Mackintoshes without their cows. Malcolm Oig arrived too late to take part in the battle. But evidently he bore John no ill-will, for some time afterwards he married Janet Munro, his sister.

In 1457 James II. paid what seems to have been his first visit to Inverness since he had taken the reins of power into his own hands in 1449. But in 1455 he had granted letters at Edinburgh in favour of the burgh, apparently on a complaint from the burgesses that their rights and privileges had been infringed by a grant made some time previously to Fortrose and to the Bishop and Church of Ross. By these letters were confirmed, "unhurt and unweakened, the rights, liberties, and privileges of our said burgh and burgesses thereof." The King's visit in 1457, however, was marked by an act which again roused the burgesses to a fear that their much-prized privileges were in danger. On the 12th of October James granted at Inverness a charter to Tain. Whereupon the burgesses of Inverness protested loudly, and to such purpose that ten days later, on 22nd

October, the King granted at Edinburgh letters confirming to them all their "rights, liberties, privileges, and infeftments."

Earlier in the same year, 1457, it was enacted that the Lords of Session should sit thrice in the year, each time forty days, in these three places, Edinburgh, Perth, and Aberdeen; the number of persons shall be nine, three from each estate. The next session to be held in Aberdeen on 15th June." One of the three persons appointed for that session from the Third Estate, that is from the representatives of the burghs, was Walter Thomsone of Inverness. So here we have the name of another early Parliamentary representative of Inverness, and a pretty strong suggestion that he was a man of weight and ability.

As we have seen, the Castle of Inverness was annexed to the Crown in 1455. A very unusual course was then followed. Instead of appointing a man of rank or importance to the position of Governor, the King appointed "Alexander Flemyng, burgess of Perth," to be constable or keeper, though apparently with some sort of reservation in favour of the Lord Bishop of Moray, whom we find acting as "Master of the Fabric" of the Castle, and being responsible for the very extensive repairs which, as we shall presently see, were carried out under the direction of Flemyng. For his services as

constable, Flemyng received an annual payment, besides which considerable sums of money passed through his hands for the repair and the keeping of the Castle, and from these he probably obtained, according to the custom of the time, a fair amount of pickings. He doubtless also had a share in the produce of the Castle lands, and in all likelihood derived somewhat from the sale of the surplus supplies from these lands which the garrison was unable to consume. Above all, the position of constable was an important and honourable one, while in the burgh itself he ranked second only to the provost and bailies.

Alexander Flemyng owed his appointment to this post in the main to family influence, and because he had probably also rendered considerable services to the King during the troubled years of his reign. He was, moreover, a man of proved ability. He seems to have been a near connection of Lord Flemyng, who was high in favour with James II. and James III., and who as early as 1454 was acting as Steward of the King's Household. This Lord Flemyng was formerly Sir Robert Flemyng of Cumbernauld, the son of that Robert Flemyng who was beheaded in Edinburgh Castle along with the young Earl of Douglas in 1440. In the years following 1454 a number of Flemyngs rose to high positions, and there can be no doubt

that they all belonged to the family of which the Steward of the King's Household was the head, and that to his influence they largely owed their elevation. The first mention we have of Alexander Flemyng is in the Rolls under date 19th July 1446, when we find him rendering at Edinburgh the account of the Sheriff of the burgh of Perth in the double capacity of one of the bailies of Perth and "the Attorney of said Sheriff." When I mention that the Sheriff was one David Flemyng, it is quite clear how Alexander came to be his attorney. In or prior to 1455 he received a grant of the fermes (i.e., the rents) of the lands of Lidnoch, in Methven, which he held down to 1467, when he received in exchange for them a grant of the fermes of the lands of Netherhiltoun, in Leffaris, and of the fishings of Banchory. His career as constable of Inverness Castle and his subsequent fortunes we shall presently consider. The other members of the family to which he belonged, whom we meet during the reigns of James II. and III., include William Flemyng, who was Marshal of the King's Household in 1462; John Flemyng, a bailie and James Flemyng, the chaplain of Dumbarton, between the years 1464 and 1466; a John Flemyng, who about the same period received a grant of the fermes of certain lands for his services as a member of an Embassy to England; and

Malcolm Flemyng, Sheriff of Stirling in 1471. Finally there is another Flemyng of special interest to Inverness, for in 1469 there occurs an entry relating to "James Stewart and William Flemyng, Sheriffs of Inverness in that part." I have been unable to trace the exact connection between these various Flemyngs, but Cumbernauld, the seat of the family in the 15th century, is situate in the county of Dumbarton, lies only 13 miles from Stirling, and no very great distance from Perth. The family of Flemyng, therefore, rose to considerable eminence in the reigns of James II. and III., and it is worth noting that Lord Flemyng was a very intimate friend of both kings, and that he and his various relations seem to have been remarkably steady in their personal loyalty to the Royal family, when such loyalty was by no means common.

The Castle appears to have fallen into a very bad state of repair during the years of its Governorship by Livingstone. In 1457, prior to the King's visit, considerable repairs were executed upon it; and a few months later, probably as a result of that visit, very extensive improvements were begun, and were continued more or less during the ensuing ten years. The fortifications were not only greatly strengthened, but the Castle itself was renovated internally, and made a place of greater comfort

than it had hitherto been. Among the payments specified in 1458 are £20 to the Lord Bishop of Moray "for the fabric of the Castle," and £6 13s 4d to the constable "for the repair of the houses of the Castle of Inverness." The items on which the latter sum was expended are detailed, and are worth recording. They are "beams, oak planks, iron, wages of workmen, carpenters, roof of lead, lime, seven locks, and other necessary repairs of said Castle." There is also a further payment of forty shillings for repairing the hall and chamber of the Castle with lime, and finally a sum of £82 13s 2d, the balance at the credit of the custumars of Inverness after deduction of the foregoing and various other expenses, is handed over "for the fabric of the said Castle to the master thereof," that is, to the Bishop of Moray, for which sum he is to be answerable. These items show that in 1458 the Castle must have been in a very evil condition, and the last entry, which is an exceedingly unusual one, payments as a rule only being made for work or goods specified, proves that even after the repairs already done, much yet remained to be accomplished. In 1459 or 1460, in addition to the ordinary repairs, a large vat was built in the Castle, the lead for which was bought in Perth, and sent to Alexander Flemyng at Inverness. A little later bricklayers and carpenters were brought from



Elgin to Inverness to repair "the houses of the officers in the Castle against the arrival of the Lord King," and a supply of coal was sent by sea to Inverness for the Castle. For the carriage of the coal from the harbour to the Castle a sum of 14s 8d was paid, and it was stored there at Flemyng's risk. Evidently it was regarded as of much value, and was to be kept for the King's use only. About the same time iron gates were erected at the Castle. Throughout the next five or six years we find mention of a larder being made in the Castle, of wheat being supplied to the garrison instead of oats, of peats brought in for fuel, and of timber furnished for tables and seats. In 1460 the Bishop of Moray ceased to be "Master of the fabric of the Castle," and thenceforth Alexander Flemyng was both master and constable until 1465, when one Patrick Flegiare, a priest, became master of the fabric, or, as we would term it, master of works. In 1466 Alexander Flemyng's long term as constable came to an end, and George, Lord Gordon, succeeded him with a salary of 100 merks. This was the beginning of the long connection between the Earls of Huntly and the burgh of Inverness.

Flemyng seems to have been a very remarkable man. The Castle had been greatly improved during his long term of office, and he had won the confidence of both the Go-

vernment and the burgh. The burgh showed its confidence by rendering through him its account for the year 1465-66 at Edinburgh in July of the latter year, and very shortly thereafter the Government appointed him Chamberlain of the districts of Petty, Brachley, Strathdearn, Ardmannoch, Leffaris, and various others, which office he held until at least 1476; while about the same time, as we have already seen, he received a more valuable grant of the fermes of certain lands and fishings in exchange for those he had held since 1455. On the forfeiture of the Earldom of Ross, Flemyng was appointed keeper of Dingwall Castle, a post of very great importance, as down to 1475 it had been the seat of the Earls of Ross. He appears to have received this appointment in 1476, and held it until 1479, when on demitting office he returned to Inverness, and took up his residence there as a burgess of the town. But a man of his known ability could not long remain a simple burgess, and accordingly we find three years later this entry in the Rolls:—"Account of the Bailies of the Burgh of Inverness, rendered at Edinburgh by Alexander Flemyng and Gilbert Vaus, bailies of said Burgh (28th June 1482 from 23rd July 1476)." It is not quite clear, however, that Flemyng had really become a bailie in so remarkably short a time, for in the following year the account is

rendered at Edinburgh, "by Alexander Flemyng and Gilbert Vaus, in name of the bailies." The last mention I have been able to find of Alexander Flemyng is as a witness to the proclamation of a summons for treason against Lord Crichton at the Cross of Inverness on 23rd December 1483, but burgesses of the name of Fleming, in all probability his descendants, are in subsequent years frequently met with, and the name became in the course of a century or two one of the most common names in the burgh.

I have interrupted the chronological order of the narrative somewhat in order to follow the history of the Castle and its interesting constable. But now to resume. In 1458 James II. paid his last visit to Inverness, spending a day or two at Elgin on the way. His retinue seems to have been larger than usual, for there was not apparently a sufficiency of plates and trenchers in the Castle for their use. In the account of the Chamberlain of Moray for the year appears an entry of eight dozen plates and wooden trenchers supplied along with two bolls of malt and a quantity of salt, for the use of the Royal party. James at the same time bought from a burges of the town, one William Tawaoun, a quantity of skins of martins, for which he paid £5 18s. Skins and hides, it will be remembered, formed one of the considerable industries of Inverness.

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In 1460 James II. was killed by the bursting of a cannon at the siege of Roxburgh, and his son, James III., a boy of nine, ascended the throne. With the removal of the strong hand, it was not long before the nobles began to show signs of restlessness, and after James III. commenced to rule in person, in 1465, the country rapidly fell back to the turbulence and civil unrest from which the vigour and strength of the two first Jameses had rescued it. John, Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles, however, did not wait until James III. had demonstrated his incapacity, to raise yet again the standard of revolt. It will be remembered that he had been the ally of the Douglasses during the troubles of the previous reign, and that after Arkinholme, he had made his peace with the King. Douglas, however, had been shown no such favour, and had sought refuge at the English Court, where he lent himself a ready tool to the designs of his country's enemies.

After James II.'s death, the southern Earl renewed, by Edward IV.'s instructions, his intimacy with John of the Isles, and, visiting him as the agent of the English King, so worked upon his ambition that in 1462 John and his trusted adviser, Donald Balloch, entered, along with Douglas, into a secret treaty with Edward IV., which is one of the most extraordinary transactions of

that extraordinary time. By the terms of the treaty, John, Donald Balloch, and Douglas were to undertake the conquest of Scotland north of the Forth, and divide it between them, while Edward was to bring the South under his subjection. On the completion of the conquest, Douglas was to be reinstated in all his possessions, and the three conspirators were to recognise Edward as Lord Paramount of Scotland. Meanwhile, pending the accomplishment of the scheme, Edward was to pay liberal pensions to his three would-be vassals. With the morality of the treaty we are not here concerned. It is sufficient to bear in mind that, as I have already pointed out, the Highlanders, and especially the Islemen, did not yet regard themselves as an integral part of the Scottish nation, and that the further away the King was the better, from their point of view.

In all probability Edward did not intend the treaty to be acted on for some considerable time, and until he himself was in a position to strike hard. But patience was never a Highland virtue, and in the following year, 1463, the Lord of the Isles, knowing probably that Edward was making preparations, but not waiting to see whether these were likely in reality to come to anything, called out his vassals and sent a host, under his son Angus Og and Donald Balloch, to begin the conquest of the North. Following their

usual custom, the Islemen struck first at Inverness, the centre of the Royal Government in the Highlands. The town and Castle were seized, and Royal powers assumed by John. Proclamations were issued to the inhabitants of the burghs of Inverness and Nairn, and of the whole North country, in his name, as Earl of Ross, commanding them and all Government officers to yield obedience to Angus Og, as his father's lieutenant, under pain of death. The rents and customs due to the Crown were ordered to be paid to Angus Og, on his father's behalf, and respites and remissions, the prerogatives of the Crown, were granted in John's name. The tale of these doings soon reached Edinburgh, and John was summoned to appear to answer for his conduct before the Estates; which, of course, he refused to do. But Edward IV. did not fulfil his part of the treaty. Instead, he in December agreed to a truce with Scotland, which was to last till 31st October 1464, and without his promised support the rebellion speedily collapsed, though how is not clear. There is no record of an army taking the field against John. The probability is that, like all Highland armies, the host of the Isles speedily melted away with its booty when it was not led to further conquests, and that the Royal forces in the North were then sufficiently strong to restore order. However that may be, John succeeded in

almost immediately making his peace with the powers; and when in August 1464 the boy King, with an imposing force, visited Inverness and ratified the Charters of the burgh, one of the witnesses to the Charter of Confirmation was "John, Earl of Ross and Lord of the Isles."

The secret treaty with England had not yet leaked out, and Bishop Kennedy, who from the close of 1463 till July 1465 was the real ruler of Scotland, probably regarded the rebellion as a mere outburst of Celtic fire, which, as it so speedily collapsed, it was, in the critical condition of the kingdom, wise to forget and forgive. During the brief period the rebellion lasted, however, John, or rather Angus Og acting for him, succeeded in securing a large part of the burgh dues, and no less than £542 5s 7d of the rents of Petty, Leffare, Bonnach, Ardmannoch, the vacant See of Moray, and others. Inverness itself was neither sacked nor burned, though some sort of blackmail seems to have been exacted, but the lands surrounding the town were laid waste, and many of them in consequence were unable to pay any rent in the following year. That John, whether from policy or otherwise, was quite restored to favour, is further evidenced by an entry in the Rolls under date 30th May 1467. In 1461 he had, as Sheriff of Inverness, seized the Royal rents of the burgh,

and appropriated them to his own use. These he was now allowed to retain in terms of "a remission made by the Lord King to John, Earl of Ross, concerning the burghal rents of said burgh." In 1474 or 1475, however, the secret treaty with Edward came to light, and John was immediately summoned, on the 16th of October 1475, by open proclamation by the King's messenger at the Cross of Inverness, to compare before the next Parliament at Edinburgh to answer for his treasonings and communings with the King of England and with Sir James of Douglas. Such a proclamation must have created no small stir in the burgh. The messenger, clad in all the gay panoply of his office, surrounded by an armed escort, and accompanied by the bailies and divers of the worthy burgesses of the town—whose names are recorded as witnesses—summoned to answer, on the gravest charge known to the nation, the mighty Earl of Ross, whose vassals had held the Castle which frowned on the burgh, and whose power and wrath the burgh had often felt. John failed to appear to answer to the charge, and on 1st December 1475, he was forfeited by Parliament. But it was one thing to declare him forfeit and another to make the forfeiture effectual. So a resort to force became necessary, and in 1476 Argyle, Crawford, Athole, and Huntly prepared to take the field against him. Then



John saw the game was up, and on 15th July 1476, he came in and placed himself at the King's mercy. He was surprisingly well treated. The Queen herself interceded for him, and while he was deprived of the Earldom of Ross, the Castles of Inverness and Nairn, and the lands of Knapdale and Kintyre, he was allowed to retain the rest of his possessions, and to sit in Parliament as Lord of the Isles. In point of fact, however, he had not had real possession of the Castle of Inverness since he had held it for a few short weeks in 1463. What he was deprived of was all claim he might have had to it or to the Castle of Nairn, either by virtue of his Earldom of Ross, or by virtue of any grant, direct or implied, which might have been made to him or to his father. Thus the Earldom of Ross passed finally from the family of the Isles, and the legal connection between that family and the burgh of Inverness came at the same time to an end.

## CHAPTER VI.

1455—1476.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY.

EXCEPT during John of the Isles' brief occupation of the Castle and town in 1463, the years from 1455 to 1476 were peaceful ones in the history of the burgh. There are, however, several entries in the Exchequer Rolls from which some interesting facts may be gleaned. Several of the lands in the neighbourhood of Inverness paid rent to the Crown, not in money but in kind. The most frequently mentioned of these is Ardmannoch, in the Black Isle, the yearly rent of which was paid in grain. In the early years of Flemyng's governorship of the Castle, that grain was, on one or two occasions, sent to him and stored in the Castle or in the King's granary, which was probably within the Castle walls. In 1459 there occurs an entry of 32 chalders, 1 boll, 3 firlots of barley, sent from Inverness and Findhorn to the port of Leith, "for the household of the King," and in the following year one of "64 chalders, 3 bolls, 3 firlots of wheat and malt, sent from

the port of Inverness and Findhorn to the port of Leith in three ships." These were, most probably, part of the rents in kind. In the latter year, 1460, there is also an entry regarding a quantity of wine sent from Inverness to Leith "for the household of the King." It was sent by sea, and consisted of one pipe of Gascony wine which cost £10, and three pipes of red wine at £5 a pipe. The curious thing about this is that the wine was brought from Aberdeen to Inverness, and thence shipped to Leith, and the sum paid for the carriage of the four pipes to Inverness, viz., 20s, is set down. It is not recorded whether the long-headed men of Aberdeen gave short measure in their pipes, or whether the carriers sampled their contents on the way, or whether, a more charitable suggestion, the wear and tear of the journey caused leakage, but when the wine reached Inverness, 6 flagons and 3 quarts of red wine had to be bought "to fill said four pipes of wine, at the Inverness price of 4s per flagon—in all, 26s." Then the pipes were placed on board ship at a cost of 3s, and a further sum of 20s paid for their carriage to Leith. So altogether it does not appear to have been a very profitable transaction for the Exchequer, and we are hardly surprised to find no further consignments of wine from Inverness to Leith for the household of the King during the remainder of the century.

In 1462 there is record of a consignment of 30 marts sent from Inverness to the port of Lossy, where they were joined by 75 from the larder of Elgin. Where these marts were going to from Lossy is not mentioned, but they seem to have formed part of the contents of larders which a year or two previously had been formed at the Castles of Inverness and Elgin, and which about this time were broken up. These marts were cows or oxen which were fattened, killed, and salted for winter provisions. They formed one of the staple foods of the country. The practice and the name both continued until quite recent times, and the word "mart" is generally agreed to be an abbreviation of the name of the period at which the animal was slaughtered, namely, Martinmas. Details of the killing and curing of the Lossy consignment are given in the Rolls. Nine shillings were paid for three pipes of wine—it must have been very cheap wine—and 4s for a large tub "for preserving the aforesaid marts, with 3 bolls of salt, at 5s a boll, for salting aforesaid marts," while 20s was paid to the butchers for killing them and placing them in the larder at Elgin. Although the purpose is not stated, they appear to have been sent to Leith for the use of the King's household.

In 1470 James III. was again in Inverness. He probably held the annual Justice Aire in person, but no records of his doings have

come down to us. We know, however, that he spent a month in the town and the neighbourhood, from 23rd July to 24th August, and in the Rolls there are some interesting details of the expenses of his household during that time. Eleven chalders of corn from the Sheriffdom of Moray were brought to Inverness for the Royal use, 16 chalders of barley from the lands of Duffus, and 8 from Kintra. One-third of the fermes of Duffus was payable to the King, and that third was usually paid in barley, while the Royal fermes of Kintra were always paid in barley or oatmeal. Kintra, by the way, is not Cantray, but Kintrae, near Elgin. Hugh Rose, Baron of Kilravock, provided 13 marts which had been slain and salted and placed in the larder at Inverness in the previous year, while the Chamberlain of Moray had, in addition, to buy 14 marts and 14 sheep. Of course these represented only the local supplies. On these journeys a considerable quantity of the richer foods and of wine was always carried, while the country provided an abundance of game and fish.

The King was again at Inverness in either 1472 or 1473, probably in autumn of the former, but the only record of this visit is an entry in the Chamberlain's account for the year ending 19th July 1473 of 50 sheep bought for his use while at Inverness.

The following year, 1474, saw two events

which were of considerable importance in the social and domestic life of the burgh. For a long period there had been a Royal mill on the river a little beyond the foot of the present Haugh Brae. But as the value of the fishings in the river increased, the damage the mill did to the young fish came to be realised, and at last, on the 16th of May 1474, the King granted it to "the Alderman, Bailies, Council, and community," in order that it might be "destroyed and cast down for ever more." By the old law all the tenants on an estate had to take their grain to be ground at the mill which belonged to the estate, and to give to the miller as payment a certain proportion of the grain so ground. That proportion was known as mul-tures, and the right conferred on the mill as thirlage. The mill in the Haugh served the Crown lands, and probably also the Castle lands, in that locality, and was therefore of some value. Accordingly, while granting the mill to the burgh, the burgh was taken bound to pay to the Crown an annual rent of six merks. But as with the mill the lands which were thirled to it were now thirled to the burgh mills, and the mul-tures granted to the burgh the community made altogether a very good bargain. The King, however, reserved to himself and his successors the right to build a new mill, if such were thought expedient, "in another competent place that might do no scaith to

our said lieges in their fishings," and in that event the multures were to return to the Royal mill, and the annual payment of six merks to cease. But the reservation was merely a safeguard, and no new mill was built for these lands, either in the 15th century or, so far as I have been able to ascertain, at any time thereafter.

The grant of the above mill incidentally sets right a point which has long been a matter of controversy among Inverness antiquarians. In various old records there is mention of the Balloch Hill, or the Hill of Balloch, as the place where courts and assemblies of the burghesses were frequently held. Now the mill in this deed is described as "built upon the water of Ness, on the west side of our Castle of Inverness." And in the account of the bailies of Inverness for the years 1472 to 1476, they charge themselves with "£16 for the fermes of the mill of Ballokhill granted to said community," while in the next account they explicitly state "at six merks a year." The former is the first account in which the fermes of the mill appear, and corresponding as it does with the date of the above grant, we have thus not only the name of the mill, but its situation described, while in a deed by James VI. more than a century later, in 1588, confirming the same grant, the mill is described as "built upon the water of Ness, on the south side of the Castle, called

"lie Ballokhill mill." "Lie" is merely the Norman-French form of the familiar French "le," the, and so it is quite clear that Balloch Hill can only be the flat ground extending along the ridge from the top of the present Culduthel Brae towards Aultnaskiach. What the precise spot was on which the courts met I am not prepared to say, though the suggestion that it was on the mound on which the building long known as the Observatory, but now as Ardkeen Tower, stands, is most probably correct. That mound at all events is similar to the Court Hills in other parts of the Highlands, and we know that the annual fair was in ancient times held in its vicinity.

Among the dues which the Mediaeval Church exacted, none were more burdensome or more odious than the "death dues." When a man died the vicar of the parish exacted what was known as the "corpse present," which was usually the deceased's best cow. In addition he also claimed the "upmaist claith," which fairly well explains itself. It was the deceased's uppermost bed-covering. These dues bore very heavily on the poorer classes, and in the Lowlands especially were often a cause of great suffering to the dwellers in the country. For when a small tenant died the vicar drove off the cow which he claimed, the superior of the land probably seized another, and sometimes the Crown a third, while the "upmaist claith" could be



exacted from almost any person, of however humble degree. By 1474, however, the burgesses of Inverness had had more than enough of these exactions, and on the 20th of July of that year, probably after many unsuccessful efforts, they succeeded in coming to an agreement with the Bishop of Moray. The corpse present and the uppermost cloth were never again to be exacted from any free burgess of the burgh or his servants, and instead thereof the vicar was to have, "off the seculars, of every child in the freedom of the same, but fourpence, and twopence to be given to the clerk." The agreement was "for ever to endure." Another grievance was settled by the same deed. The vicar was entitled to a teind from the salmon caught in the burgh fishings, and apparently was in the habit of claiming as his share the best of the fish. So it was agreed that the salmon should be "sorted even as they are taken, the great together, the middlemost together, and the smallest together, and the said vicar shall take to the teind the second best of every sort." These are interesting glimpses of life in Inverness of the period. But they are more than that. They show in a very distinct manner how the power of the Medieval Church was waning, and how the old things of the Middle Ages were passing away.

## CHAPTER VII.

1476—1492.

THE REBELLIONS OF ANGUS OG AND  
ALEXANDER OF LOCHALSH.

THE period at which we have now arrived presents many difficulties, and its history is often very obscure. More legendary tales and conflicting accounts of actual events have gathered round it than round almost any other period in Highland history, and very great care requires to be exercised in separating truth from fiction, and in placing events in their proper historical sequence. However, by the aid of the authorities quoted at the beginning of these articles, and especially by the aid of the "Clan Donald," tempered by a careful study of the "Exchequer Rolls," it is possible to arrive at what is, I venture to think, a fairly accurate account of the events of the troubled years from 1476 to 1493, in so far at least as they concern Inverness. As I found good reason to differ very strongly from the treatment accorded in the "Clan

Donald" to the events preceding Harlaw, it is only right to say that its treatment of the period we have now reached is marked by a care, a moderation, and a reasonableness which render it invaluable to anyone endeavouring to thread his way through the maze of the Highland history of the time, and that without the light which it has shed on many of the chronological perplexities, the task would be a well nigh hopeless one.

As we have seen, John of the Isles was deprived of the Earldom of Ross in 1475, and in the following year made his submission to the King. That submission was not pleasing to the prouder spirits of his clan, and his son, Angus Og, who by virtue of his strong character, his proven courage, and his skill in war, had come to be regarded as the virtual Lord of the Isles, found a ready and eager following, when, aflame with resentment, he broke again into revolt. He seems to have indulged in private war and reprisals on his own account during the years immediately succeeding 1476, but John contrived to stand aloof, and to convince the Government of his own good intentions. Then for a year or two events pursued a peaceful course—though in 1479 Edward IV. renewed his intrigues with the Lord of the Isles—and in May 1481 we find John forming one of the Scottish army, which, setting out to invade England, was turned from its course by a Papal Bull. The confiscation

of the earldom, however, still rankled in the bosom of Angus Og, and, according to a well known legend, an insult to his sister, who had married Kenneth Mackenzie, younger of Kintail, provided him with a pretext for breaking into Ross, and, under cover of avenging the insult, endeavouring to recover the earldom by force.

Scotland at this time was passing through a period of stress and trouble. From the spring of 1480 to August of 1482, she was engaged in war with England, while within her own borders there was added to the domestic strife engendered by the quarrels of the nobles with the King and the King's favourites, a year of famine and dearth. On the conclusion of the English war, there were constant disputes between the king and the nobles, and until the close of the reign in 1488, the kingdom was in a state of unrest, bordering on and sometimes breaking into civil strife, while by rank misgovernment, by the insolence and overbearing behaviour of the royal favourites, and by a fatal readiness in exacting the penalty of forfeiture, the King alienated almost all classes of his subjects.

For Angus Og's designs the times were favourable. So the fiery cross was once again sent round, and the islemen stormed into Ross. Now we have come to the point when we must feel our way most carefully. For the years from 1480 to 1490 our infor-

mation is very scanty, though certain episodes stand out in strong relief. The "Clan Donald" dates this outbreak in 1481, and from a close examination of the Exchequer Rolls, I have arrived at a similar conclusion. In the account of the Chamberlain of Ross, presented on 13th July 1486, for the three years from 16th July 1483, the following entry occurs:—"For keeping Dingwall Castle, receiving yearly £100, for the three years of this account and for the three years preceding, £400." That is, the Chamberlain had been unable to collect the royal rents wherewith to pay his salary as keeper of the Castle during the three years preceding 16th July 1483, and had eventually to forego £200—two years' salary. It is unfortunate that the account for 1481 to 1483 is missing, but the accounts for the two years prior to 21st July 1481 exist, and contain no mention of any "devastation," while the arrears are only nominal. The account from 16th July 1483 to 13th July 1486, however, opens with heavy arrears, carried forward from the missing account, amounting to £354 0s 8d; 117 chalders of wheat, oats, and barley; 102 cattle, and 105 sheep. These represent more than one year's rents, and as Angus Og could hardly have seized every rent in Ross, they quite clearly prove not only that his inroad took place in 1481, but that he held the earldom for a considerable period.

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The account of the bailies of Inverness, rendered on 28th June 1482 for the six years preceding, bears out that 1481 is the correct date of the invasion, and helps us to reconstruct the narrative of the events which accompanied it. The account shows the heavy arrears of £114 14s 4d. Of these £46 11s were arrears from the previous account—they represent the sum seized by the Lord of the Isles in 1461—so that leaves actual arrears on the six years of the account of £68 3s 4d. Now, such arrears were extremely unusual, and require some explanation. The accounts of the bailies of Inverness in the 15th century go back as far as 1427, and from then onwards very few are missing. These accounts deal entirely with the royal rents of the burgh. On every occasion on which arrears of any importance appear, I have found that the town had suffered some disaster which made it difficult or impossible for the burgesses to pay. For example, for the year ending 6th May 1428, there were no arrears. A month or two later the town was burnt by Alexander of the Isles, and in the account presented on 13th March 1429, there are very heavy arrears, a large part of which were subsequently remitted by the King. The town did not recover fully until 1435, but from that date down to 1461 there were no arrears on any of the accounts. The next arrears coincide with the Lord of the Isles' appro-

priation to his own use of the royal rents in 1461, and with his revolt in 1463. Thence to 1476 the arrears are merely nominal, and that brings us to the account under discussion, viz., that for 1476 to 1482. I have emphasised this point, as it is on the bailies' accounts for the next few years that my attempt to reconstruct the history of the burgh between 1480 and 1490 is very largely based. From 1476 down to 1481, there had been no breaking of the King's peace in these parts, and the arrears could hardly have accumulated then. And they amount to only a little more than one year's royal fermes of the burgh, which at this time were £57 6s 8d. It is evident therefore that they represent the rents for the year 1481-1482. So now we have something definite to go on for our dates and for our history. And my reading of these things is this.

In the summer of 1481 Angus Og broke into Ross, either plundering or burning Inverness on his way, seized the Castle of Dingwall, and proceeded to lay waste the lands of his enemies, the Mackenzies. The Government had its hands too full to interfere, and for nearly two years Angus Og held the Castle of Dingwall, and lorded it in the North in name of his father as Earl of Ross. For the time being he had recovered the earldom, and having achieved his purpose, contented himself with maintaining his position and exacting simply the dues

which the Earl of Ross was entitled to from his vassals. That accounts for there being no descent upon Inverness between 1481 and 1483. It was simply a repetition of what had happened in 1451, when, it will be remembered, John of the Isles seized the earldom, and in a similar manner had his actions ignored by the Government. But in August 1482 the war with England came to an end, and within the next few months the King succeeded in bringing to a close his long strife with his brother Albany by driving him into exile and securing his attainder, while in April 1483 the death of Edward IV. put an end for the time being to the danger from England. So the Government was now free to turn its attention to affairs in the Highlands, and the Earl of Athole was accordingly sent North to drive out Angus Og. With a force composed for the most part of the Islesmen's enemies, the Mackenzies, the Mackays, the Frasers, the Brodies, and the Rosses, Athole met the army of the Isles at Lagabraad, in Ross, and suffered a total defeat, 517 of his men being slain, and the chief of the Mackays captured. It is possible that this battle may have been fought in 1481, and formed the prelude to Angus Og's two years' occupation of Ross, but the general opinion is in favour of the later date, and I think it is the more probable of the two for this reason. Had the royal forces suffered so severe a defeat in



1481, even the distracted condition of the country would not have prevented strong measures being taken against the victor or against his father. Affairs were by no means so bad that a royal defeat in the North would have been overlooked. So long, however, as Angus Og merely held the earldom, and warred only with his clan enemies, the Government could afford to bide its time, to concentrate its energies on the greater difficulties besetting it, and then, when it was in a position to strike, to strike strongly. The victory at Lagabraad, accordingly, did not prove of much benefit to Angus, for the Government took prompt and vigorous measures to reassert the royal authority. Athole and Huntly were entrusted with the task, and, though no details of any kind have come down to us, we know that they proved successful, and that in 1483 Angus Og was compelled to abandon Ross. Here again, however, it is possible to make some attempt to reconstruct the progress of events.

On 20th July 1486 the bailies of Inverness presented their account for the three years from 19th July 1483 to date. The arrears for these three years amounted to £50 14s— a little less than a year's royal rents. And there was no Angus Og in the North from 1484 to 1486. But the Earl of Huntly was Governor of Inverness Castle, and the representative of the royal authority in the

district. So when he called out his forces in 1483 to join Athole, the burgesses of Inverness, who were bound in any event to give military service to the Crown, were doubtless compelled to provide a larger contingent than usual, and probably were not at all averse to so doing. For were not the Macdonalds of the Isles their burgh's inveterate enemies, and was not their armed occupation of Ross hostile to their interests? What happened next we cannot tell. Had there been a pitched battle there would certainly have been some record or tradition concerning it, and there is neither. But what probably happened was this. In face of the immensely superior force of Athole and Huntly, for they would take no risks a second time, Angus Og retreated. He could hardly retire towards the north or west, for the northern and hostile clans lay between him and safety. So, eluding the force advancing against him from Inverness, he swooped on the town, gave a portion of it to the flames, seized what plunder he could, and made good his escape through Badenoch and Lochaber to Inverlochry. He thus accomplished a double purpose. He obtained some very welcome provisions and booty for his men, and avenged himself on both the Earl of Huntly and the burgesses. I do not suggest, however, that the town suffered very seriously. The attack was rather of the nature of a raid which, hard

pressed as Angus Og was, he had no time to carry out nearly so effectively as he would doubtless have desired.

During the four years following the expulsion of Angus Og from Ross, Inverness enjoyed a period of peace. But the unsettled state of the country and the want of a strong central government precluded a return of prosperity, and the recuperative powers of the burgh were consequently severely taxed. In 1482 the total arrears due by the burgh amounted to £114 14s 4d, and 22 lbs. of pepper. At 19th July 1483 they had increased to £123 12s 4d, and 23 lbs. of pepper; and by 20th July 1486, to £174 6s 4d, and 26 lbs. of pepper. When we bear in mind that the yearly dues only amounted to £57 6s 8d, it will be understood how disastrous the events of 1481 and 1483 had been, not only in the actual loss they inflicted at the time, but also in their after effects. Though unable to wipe out any of the arrears, however, the burgh by 1485 had begun to recover, and during the two following years experienced a measure of its former prosperity. But it had, unhappily, not yet seen the last of Angus Og.

The years subsequent to 1483 Angus Og had spent partly in war with his father, partly in the famous raid of Athole, and partly in the government of his father's

dominions of the Isles. But his thoughts still turned towards the confiscated earldom of Ross, and at last, apparently in 1487, he judged the moment had come to once again attempt its recovery by force of arms. His father was by this time a mere puppet in his hands, and his father's many vassals rendered obedience to him alone, so that all things seemed propitious. Unfortunately, at this point the veil again falls, and we have to grope our way with exceeding care. Certain events, however, loom out of the gloom. Our difficulty is to place them properly. I think the best course I can follow is to tell the tale as I read it, and thereafter to adduce my proofs, and to point out wherein and why I diverge somewhat from the narrative of those others who have written of the same period.

Angus Og apparently intended to conduct his new campaign on a larger scale than that of 1481. It was to be no mere devastating raid, followed, if things went favourably, by a prolonged possession of Ross, but a well-planned effort to recover the earldom. Accordingly, he seized Inverness, and made it the base of his intended operations. He began by calming the fears of the inhabitants, and restraining the predatory instincts of his followers. Then he invited his friends and allies to the town, and entertained them hospitably. His aim

appears to have been to win the good graces of those who were not his natural enemies, and so secure their neutrality, and perhaps their assistance, when he seized the earldom of which his family had been so wrongously, as he argued, deprived. All was going well when suddenly a grim tragedy put an end for ever to his ambitions. An Irish harper, moved, it is said, by love for the daughter of Mackenzie of Kintail, whose hand he had been promised in marriage as the reward of his deed, entered one night the apartment of Angus Og, and killed him as he slept. The Macdonalds awoke to find themselves leaderless. In their fury they poured out their vengeance on the town, and Inverness was sacked and burned. Nor did the harper escape to win the reward of his deed. He was torn to pieces by wild horses.

The "Clan Donald," which is the only reliable authority, places the murder of Angus Og in 1490, on the authority of the Irish Annals of Loch Ce. I have placed it either in the latter part of 1487 or in the spring of 1488. And my reason is this. On the 17th of May 1488 James III., on the intercession of the Master of Huntly, granted a remission to the burgh of Inverness "of all sums of money resting owing to us of our said burgh maills, of whatsoever terms bygone, before the date of these our letters," as the burgh "and the burgesses and the inhabitants

of the same are so greatly impoverished, wasted, and failed, that they are not of power to pay." The bailies' accounts were presented on the 29th February following for the three years from 20th July 1486, and show the heavy arrears for these three years of £99 16s. So it is quite clear that the remission was not meant to apply only to the arrears of the account of 1486, and if there were any doubt on the point, it is proved by the remission itself, which goes on to "charge our said comptrollers and auditors to make allowance in our next Exchequer, or others when these our letters be shown." It is true that in the account for the three years from 29th February 1489 to 12th November 1492, there are again heavy arrears of £100 18s 4d. But these are sufficiently accounted for by the storming of the town in 1491 by Alexander of Lochalsh, which we shall presently consider, and I do not think it can be seriously advanced that any part of these refer to yet another sack in 1490. For the gist of my contention is this. The town must have been sacked by Angus Og's followers when they discovered his murder. They would be only obeying a perfectly natural instinct in wreaking their vengeance on the first object that offered itself to them in their fury, in this case the town in which he had been done to death. And if any further incentive were needed,

they had always regarded Inverness as their lawful prey. To state these two facts is sufficient. That the town was not sacked would be incredible. And we have conclusive evidence that Inverness was sacked in 1487-88. It was not sacked in 1490. Therefore the date of the last campaign and the murder of Angus Og must be placed either late in 1487 or early in 1488.

In the remission granted by James III. to the burgh, the Master of Huntly was empowered to collect the burgh rents for the next nineteen years, and account for them to the Exchequer. But the remission never came into force. It is dated 17th May, and in less than a month afterwards James III. was dead, murdered in cold blood on the night of the battle of Sauchieburn, the 11th of June. Within a few weeks thereafter the new Government passed an Act Rescissory, annulling all grants of land and offices by James III. since the 2nd of February 1488. The remission to Inverness seems to have been covered by this Act, for though the bailies' accounts were presented on 29th February 1489, the arrears were not written off, but were carried forward to the next account, while the grant of the collection of the rents to the Master of Huntly in the remission never became effective. The remission was doubtless prejudiced in the eyes of the new Government by the fact that it had

been granted on the prayer of the Master of Huntly, who, in the civil war just ended, had fought on the side of the murdered King.

The death of Angus Og restored to his father, John, the supreme power in the Isles. But John does not seem to have been fitted by nature to be the leader of a great and turbulent clan, and in a very short time he had allowed his powerful and warlike nephew, Alexander of Lochalsh, to become, like Angus Og, the virtual ruler of the Isles. Alexander held extensive lands in Wester Ross—Lochalsh, Lochbroom, and Lochcarron—and he doubtless hoped on John's death to unite to them the Lordship of the Isles. For Donald Dubh, the real heir, was a mere child, and a prisoner in the hands of Argyle, while his legitimacy was at least doubtful.

In 1491, fired possibly by dreams of a vast domain, which should include the Isles, Wester Ross, and the forfeited lands in Easter Ross, Alexander summoned his own and his father's vassals to his standard, and apparently with John's consent, advanced on Inverness in yet another attempt to recover the earldom. His route lay through Lochaber and Badenoch, and on his march he was joined by the Camerons and the Mackintoshes. Reaching Inverness, the town was stormed and



sacked, and the Castle taken by assault and garrisoned. Meanwhile the vassals of the earldom had been summoned to join Alexander, but one only, Hugh Rose, younger of Kilravock, responded to the call, and came in to Alexander at Inverness. On this occasion the sack of the town was very complete, and the greater part of it was burned. The motley host which Alexander led, composed as it was of several different clans, required booty to keep it together, and this it doubtless was which caused Alexander to make no effort to restrain his followers in Inverness, and which immediately thereafter prompted him to lead them to the devastation of the Black Isle, and the plunder of the lands of Cromarty. By that time the expedition for the recovery of the earldom had become a mere plundering raid, and Alexander, flushed with success, bethought himself of his enemies, the Mackenzies. So he divided his forces in two, sent one-half home with the booty, and with the other descended on Strathconan, and laid it waste. He was surprised, however, by the Mackenzies near Brahan, and so utter was his rout that he was compelled to abandon his attempt to recover the earldom. This is the battle known in Highland legend and history as Blar na Pairc. But if he had hoped that the Government would again ignore the rebellious actions of his clan, he had reckoned

without his host. James IV. was a very different man from his father. He took prompt and vigorous measures to assert the royal authority, and in May 1493 Parliament passed the final doom of forfeiture on the Lord of the Isles.

The bailies' account for the three years from 29th February 1489 to 12th November 1492 show how severely the town had suffered. The arrears at the close of the last account were £274 2s 4d, and 32 lbs. of pepper. They now amounted to £375 0s 8d, and 35 lbs. of pepper. That is, the actual arrears for these three years were £100 18s 4d, and 3 lbs. of pepper.

This account was presented at Inverness in the presence of the King himself. James could not fail to see to what a condition the town had been reduced, and doubtless the ineffectual remission granted by his father in 1488 was produced, and the story of the town's sufferings during the past ten years impressed upon him. The result was that all the arrears due in 1492, viz., £375 0s 8d, and 35 lbs. of pepper, were wiped out on payment of a composition of £35 13s 4d. The entry in the Exchequer Rolls graphically describes the reasons for the remission. "On account of the poverty and want of the burgesses and inhabitants of the said burgh, as it has been destroyed by the wars and tumults in these parts, and the Castle has

been destroyed as well," it runs. Even with that large remission, however, the town took several years to recover, and it was not until 1496 that the last instalment of the composition of £35 13s 4d was paid. Thereafter, under the strong government of James IV., its prosperity returned, and there were no further arrears during the few remaining years of the century.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1492—1500.

INVERNESS IN THE CLOSING YEARS OF THE  
FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

THE troubled years from 1480 to 1490 are a blank so far as the social and economic history of the burgh is concerned. But with the advent of James Fourth's strong and stable government, Inverness was able, in the closing years of the century, to again turn its attention to the encroachments of the other northern burghs on its privileges. In 1493 the King was at Inverness, and the burgh brought before him its grievances against Tain and the inhabitants of Sutherland, Ross, and Caithness. The result was that on 12th November James issued letters directed to the merchants and inhabitants of these places charging them "to present all their goods marketable" at the burgh of Inverness, "and that as to their principal market." The letters set forth that the dwellers in the Northern Counties "have of long time bygone not brought the said goods

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could claim a monopoly of the whole trade of the Northern Counties. The days of mediævalism were drawing to an end, and with them were going the old ideas which had governed the trade of the country for so long. With the close of the fifteenth century it may indeed be said that the heyday of the importance and prosperity of mediæval Inverness as the market and distributing centre of the North was fast passing away. So the northern burghs continued to infringe the old-time privileges of Inverness, and Inverness ineffectually to protest.

During the closing years of the century James IV. often visited Inverness. He never forgave himself for the part he had taken in the rebellion which had resulted in his father's death, and was in the habit of making almost yearly pilgrimages to the shrine of St Duthus, in Tain, to do penance and hear masses for the soul of the dead King. On these journeys he had perforce to pass through Inverness, and the burgh consequently had frequent opportunities of laying its petitions before him, and of basking in the royal favour.

We learn from a remission granted by James at Inverness in November 1492 that there had been a bloody fight in the burgh earlier in the year between the burgesses and the laird of Cawdor's men. Four of the former were slain, and by the remission the

King pardoned the assailants, "provided that to the parents and friends of the said slaughtered individuals they make amends and satisfaction, and likewise satisfy others who have endured loss." Two years later, on 25th October 1494, another remission was granted to the laird of Cawdor and various members of his family by the King again at Inverness. In April 1493 they had been sentenced to death by a Justiciary Court at Aberdeen, and by this remission they were granted a full pardon. I have been unable to discover what "the criminal actions committed by them," as the remission has it, were, but doubtless they were the outcome of one of the family feuds which at this period were frequent in the Highlands.

In January and February 1497 the King was again at Inverness. On this occasion it was not the laird of Cawdor, but his neighbour, Hugh Rose of Kilravock, who had been carrying things with a high hand, and who consequently had to crave the royal pardon. Again we have no knowledge of the events for which a remission was sought and granted, beyond what is set forth in the remission itself. But that is sufficient to show that they were of considerable gravity, and that the lairds in the neighbourhood of Inverness were inclined to be turbulent. The remission is to Hugh Rose and several others "for act and part in the cruel slaughter of

the late Alexander Nobill, John Nobill, William Gawane, and of a certain chaplain, the late Lord Maurice by name, within the burying ground of the Cathedral Church of Ross."

At the same time a Justice Ayre was held in the burgh, and was presided over by Lord Drummond. The chief business before it was the question of compensation arising out of the devastation of the lands of Cromarty by the Macdonalds and their allies in 1491. It will be remembered that the Mackintoshes and Hugh Rose, younger of Kilravock, had joined Alexander of Lochalsh in his attempt to recover the Earldom of Ross. But on the failure of the invasion the wheels of the law had been put in motion by the Urquharts, the owners of the devastated lands, and judgment obtained against certain of the Macdonalds for compensation for the loss and injury caused by them. Mackintosh and Kilravock became security for the payment of the compensation, but by the close of 1496 it had not been forthcoming, and accordingly at this Justice Ayre Kilravock was adjudged liable, and decree pronounced against him. He had ultimately to grant his bond for 800 merks to settle the matter. He had, however, a claim for relief against his fellow security Mackintosh, which Mackintosh was not too willing to admit. A dispute arose between



them over the matter, which ended in a court of arbiters, consisting of several of the neighbouring lairds, presided over by the Earl of Huntly, meeting in the Castle in 1499, and apparently effecting a satisfactory settlement of "the many and divers quarrels, debates, controversies, and ingritudes, arisen and committed betwixt said persons."

The last royal visit to Inverness in the fifteenth century was in November 1499. On the 4th of that month James granted a charter to Mackay of Strathnaver of certain lands in Caithness and Sutherland, "for the good, faithful, and gratuitous service done to us by our beloved servant, both in the time of peace and war." The "good, faithful, and gratuitous service" was the treacherous handing over of his nephew, Alexander Sutherland, the rightful owner of the lands, to forfeiture and execution on a charge of treason!

There is little mention of the Castle during the closing years of the century, and one might well be excused imagining that it had not recovered from the severe handling it received in the rebellion of 1491. That this supposition is wrong, however, is proved by an entry in the Rolls in 1501, and it is quite in keeping with the fitness of things that the last record we have relating to the history of the burgh in the fifteenth century should refer to the Castle, and set at rest

our doubts concerning it. During his visit to Inverness in 1499, James IV. appears to have lodged in the Castle, and six barrels of salmon were provided by the Chamberlain of Moray for the use of the royal household, while about the same time two other barrels were deposited in the Castle "against the arrival of the King," the Constable, John Ogilvie, being explicitly charged with their safe keeping. The clerk who engrossed that entry in the Exchequer Rolls on the 4th of August 1501 little imagined that his crabbed Latin writing would prove to the historian four hundred years later that the Castle of Inverness, which since its reconstruction by the Earl of Mar in 1412 had suffered so many rude buffets of fortune, had survived perhaps the rudest buffet of all, its storm and capture by Alexander of Lochalsh, and at the close of the fifteenth century still stood as a place of strength and repute.

In the accounts of the bailies of Inverness throughout the century, three entries continually occur which are of considerable interest. The first entry on the discharge side of the account is invariably "for payment made to the Preaching Friars of said burgh, who receive £10 yearly from the fermes of said burgh, of the ancient charity of the King, as is clear in the old Rolls, £10." The "Preaching Friars" are of course the Black Friars, and the King by whom the

grant was made was Robert the Bruce. In 1370 David II. confirmed a charter of Robert the Bruce, which granted to the friars for the endowment of their Church, "£10 annually by the hands of our provosts (i.e., our magistrates) for the time being from the fermes of our burgh of Inverness in free, holy, and perpetual charity." The second entry on the discharge side is also the same in every account throughout the century. It runs, "To the chaplain celebrating in the Cathedral of Moray, receiving annually out of the fermes of said burgh 8s 8d." It was not quite clear why a chaplain in Elgin Cathedral should receive a grant from the fermes of Inverness, but on examining the earliest accounts of the bailies of Inverness which have been preserved, I found under date 1366, "To the chaplain of our lord the King, officiating in the Cathedral of Elgin, granted to him of the charity of the King in augmentation of his salary, 8s 8d." So it is apparent that a royal chaplain was maintained in Elgin Cathedral, and towards his salary it was perfectly natural that the fermes of Inverness should contribute.

These two payments, to the friars and the chaplain, were made every year as they fell due, and in none of the accounts are they unpaid, not even in the years in which Inverness suffered heavy losses by fire and pillage. The reason is simple. The royal

fermes were collected at two terms in the year by the bailies, and out of the sums in their hands these two payments were made. They did not hand over to the Exchequer the entire sum due by the burgh, but that sum less the grants made out of it by the King, and paid direct by them, and for which they exhibited receipts when they presented their accounts. And of course the ecclesiastical authorities were always at hand to obtain their dues at the earliest possible moment.

The third entry to which I have referred occurs on the charge side of the accounts. It runs, "for the land of Markynche, one pound of pepper." This was the reddendo for which the lands of Merkinch were granted by Alexander II. to the burgh in 1236, and though it was not always paid, it was always exigible. It is not clear whether this reddendo was meant to be of some value or to be merely an illusory duty. In the early Middle Ages pepper was by no means a common luxury, and it is possible that Alexander II., in fixing the reddendo of the Merkinch at a pound of pepper, had in view the fact that Inverness was a seaport with a foreign trade, and that pepper was almost unobtainable for the royal kitchen in the northern part of his dominions. He was, in any event, but following a practice which was common enough in other coun-

tries, though somewhat rare in Scotland. The first record we have of its being paid by Inverness is in the account of 1331, when 17s was paid in respect of the pound due for that year and the sixteen years preceding. Thereafter it occurs only at long intervals throughout the rest of the fourteenth century, and is not even mentioned in many of the accounts, either as due or in arrear. In the fifteenth century, however, it was not allowed to fall into abeyance. The first mention we have of it is in 1451, when there was "paid by the bailies of the burgh of Inverness for 19 lbs. of pepper due from the fermes of said burgh from of old, at 2s 6d a lb., £2 7s 6d." Thereafter, down to 1457, it was regularly paid, but from then until 1492 only 12 lbs. were paid at irregular intervals, instead of the 47 lbs. which were actually due. But it appears regularly in the accounts, and the arrears are carefully carried forward. In 1492 the arrears of 35 lbs. of pepper were remitted, and at the end of the century only 1½ lbs. had not been paid. That amount, however, was remitted in 1497, when 4 lbs. were paid "for the use of the household of the King." The most interesting entry of all occurs under date 30th October 1499, on one of the King's visits to Inverness. It reads, "To Thome Schaw, chief cook, for use in cooking, 1 lb. pepper."

We have now traced at considerable length the story of the fortunes of Inverness in the fifteenth century, and have obtained some glimpses of the manners and customs of its inhabitants, and of the social and economic conditions under which they lived. We saw it at the beginning of the fifteenth century a mediæval town, steeped in all the ideas of mediævalism; we followed throughout the fifteenth century its varying fortunes—its burnings, its pillages, its many resurrections from its own ashes; we leave it at the close of the fifteenth century on the threshold of the Renaissance, with the old things which it had so long known passing away.



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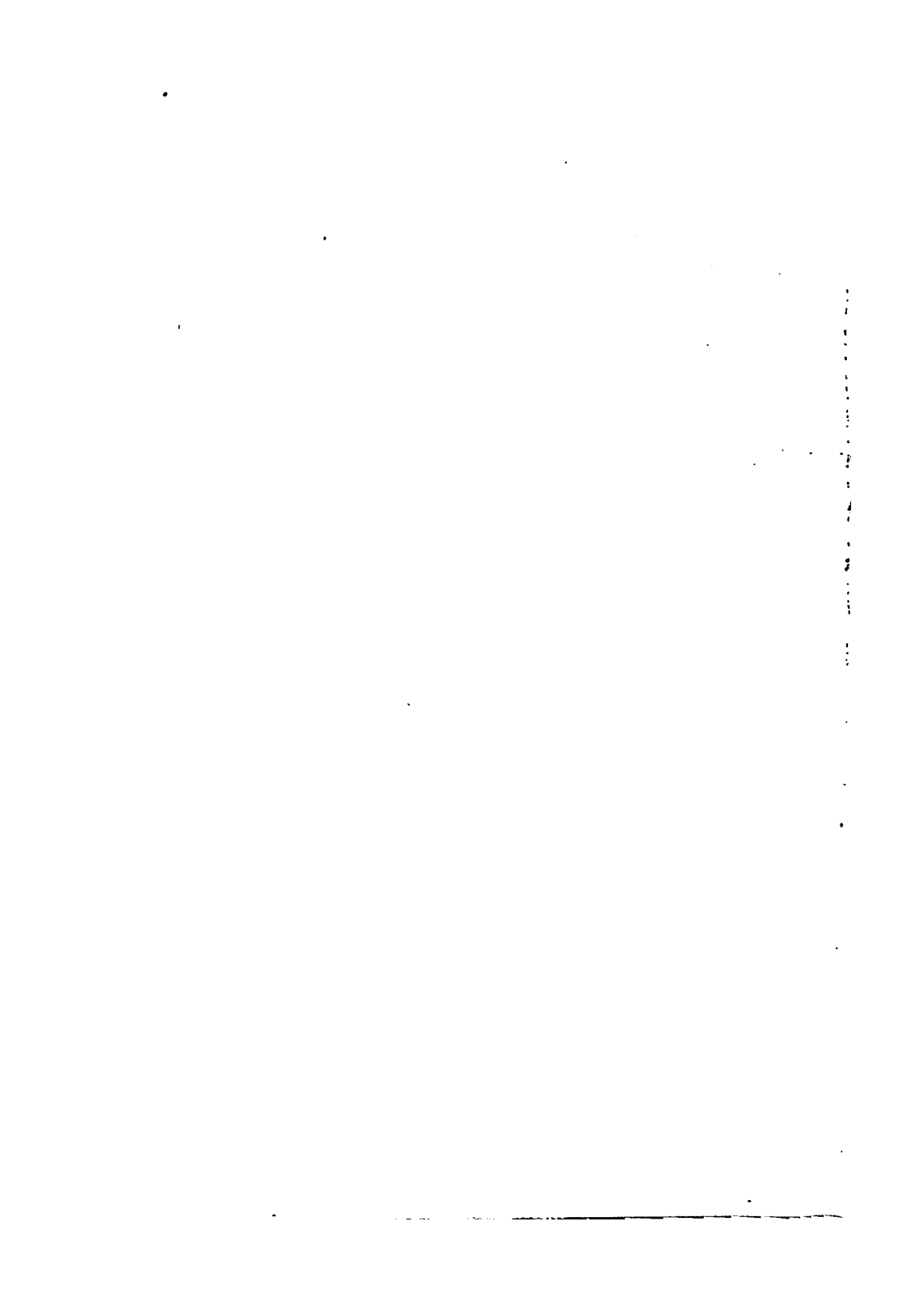














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